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Allegiances

(***A/N:*** Once again, if you have not read Warriors: Uprising first, I suggest you do that! This is the second book in the Uprising series by me!)

Vertexclan

Leader

Skystar- A tall, grey tom with a white belly and blue eyes.

Deputy

Buzzardgaze- A big, lanky tom. His fur is grey and tawny with a spotted tabby pattern. He has a round face with oval hazel eyes.

Medicine Cat

Nova- A short, lithe she-cat with narrow blue-violet eyes. Her fur is night black, with white heart-shaped patches.

Warriors

Stagwhisper- a short, grey tom

Rockcreek- a tall, ginger tabby tom

Smokedream- a bright ginger classic tabby she-cat

Crownight- a white she-cat with black tortoiseshell patches

Queens

Scorchwatcher- A smoky black-furred she-cat with orange eyes (mother to **Emberkit**, a grey she-cat with grey eyes, **Lionkit**, a cream and fawn-furred tom with green eyes, and **Marigoldkit**, a golden-furred she-cat with blue eyes.) (Mate: Stagwhisper)

Cloudthorn- a deep yellow mackerel tabby she-cat with green eyes (mother to **Lightningkit**, a white-furred tom with black paws, and **Rainkit**, a white-furred tom with grey paws.) (Mate: Rockcreek)

Elders

Greenscar- A tall, well-muscled she-cat. Her fur is ginger and cream with a spotted tabby pattern. She has narrow bright yellow eyes. Greenscar has a scarred pelt.

Driftclan

Leader

Shellstar- A light grey short-haired cat with dark grey speckles and a white muzzle.

Deputy

Featherdrip- Her fur is blue gray with a spotted tabby pattern, she has light green eyes.

Medicine Cats

Otterpelt- A small she-cat with creamy brown fur, with a white muzzle and a white tail. She has large blue eyes. Otterpelt has lost sight in her left eye.

Thistlewhisper- White fluffy she-cat with tufted white ears and small paws, her eyes are light-green

Warriors

Eagleswoop- His fur is dark cream, with a white patch on chest and a white chest. It is silky and of medium length. He has a circular face with large blue eyes.

Dampbreeze- A golden tabby tom with a splash of white on his chest, he has amber eyes

Sandcoat- His fur is cream and grey with a classic tabby pattern, with a white chest. He has narrow hazel eyes.

Hailpad- White fluffy tom with tufted white ears and small paws, his eyes are a light yellow

Gullstalk- A small white tom with black markings, a short bobbed black tail, he has one torn ear and amber eyes

Eelspeck- A dark grey tom with darker specks, his eyes are a dark green and he has tufted ears and long whiskers

Stormfish- A silver-blue tom, he has short fur and his tail is a lighter blue silver than his body, his eyes are a deep blue

Sagethorn- A large, muscular she-cat. Her fur is white, with night-black patches. She has violet eyes.

Lionsplash- A golden tabby she-cat with a splash of white on her chest, she has soft green eyes and short fur.

Queens

Rushstreak- A dark ginger she-cat, she has bright yellow eyes, a light muzzle belly and paws, and markings that look like streaks running along her sides. (mother to **Hollowkit**, a small brown and golden-furred kit with jade eyes, **Ripplekit**, a white-furred kit with light brown eyes, and **Mistkit**, a tawny and grey with a spotted tabby pattern and has orange-red eyes.) (Mate: Sandcoat)

Elders

Tansytail- A little wiry she-cat. Her fur is yellow and silky with a striped tabby pattern. She has an almond-shaped dark amber eye. Tansytail has a clawed-out eye.

Cats outside of the Clans

Shredflash- A grey tom with a scarred pelt, he also has black socks and a black ear. He has maroon eyes and a scar through his left eye.

Eclipse- A black she-cat with violet-blue eyes

Fang- A black she-cat with two grey front paws. She has burgundy eyes.

Prologue

Dampbreeze had tears falling down his face as he sat in the sand. The tears were hitting the lump of sand was under him. "Why did it have to be like this, Blizzardfluff? Why did you fight that cat alone!?" his mew was shaky. A tail lay on his shoulders as he looked over at the she-cat next to him.

"It'll be alright Dampbreeze... She and Icejaw are in a better place now. There's nothing we could have done to prevent this." she meowed.

"Sagethorn." Dampbreeze started. "Don't you want to get revenge on that Vertexclan cat for killing both your mate and daughter?" He shrugged her tail off of his shoulders. He was still staring at Blizzardfluff's grave.

"Revenge won't solve anything though, it will just cause more hate between cats..."

"Not if *I* have anything to do about it." Dampbreeze growled lowly he lifted his head and then turned around, he padded back towards Driftclan.

"Dampbreeze!" Sagethorn called to her clanmate. "Please do nothing that will get you in trouble!"

Dampbreeze didn't care what she had to say.

He wanted the cat that killed his mate to feel his pain.

*

Once Dampbreeze got back to camp, he headed to the Nursery to see Rushstreak. Once he got there, he peaked his head in and saw the she-cat lift her head. "Hey, Dampbreeze." she mewed. The three kits that were nuzzled up against her belly were sleeping.

"Hi, I want to talk to you about something." He kept his meow low

so he wouldn't wake the kits.

"What is it?"

"Please, never tell Mistkit about Blizzardfluff. I don't want him to know that she is his actual mother," He meowed.

"But why? You're his father! He hasn't seen you yet and you would have to tell him about his mother, eventually..."

"That's the thing," he said, "I don't want him to know that I'm his father *at all*."

Rushstreak gasped, "I feel like that's a little too cruel Dampbreeze, even for you!"

"I want my son to be happy knowing that he has a mother and father that love him. He would be sad knowing that he just has a father and I can't bear to see my kit look upset at all." He looked away for a bit, sadness in his eyes.

"I-I'm sure he would understand at some point, Dampbreeze! There's no reason to lie..."

"Please, Rushstreak, just do this for me. I want Mistkit to be happy."

Rushstreak looked at the sleeping Mistkit and then back at Dampbreeze. Then she sighed, "F-Fine... But promise one thing, though..."

"Promise what?" The tom was leaving the Nursery but turned his head around.

"That when Mistkit becomes a warrior, you must tell him the truth. If you don't, then I will myself." She meowed.

Dampbreeze hesitated before speaking again. "I promise."

Rushstreak laid her head down and closed her eyes as Dampbreeze left the Nursery.

What the two Driftclan cats didn't know, is that one kit huddled

against Rushstreak's belly, was in fact, not sleeping.

Chapter 1

Skystar didn't know how to feel about his clan like Birdstar did. Ever since Shredflash killed Blacksting and ran away, some cats feel frightened and worried about the future of Vertexclan. The medicine cat of Vertexclan, Nova, had told Skystar that Shredflash went to Driftclan and killed a warrior named Icejaw. Because of Nova telling him this, Skystar has been anxious that Driftclan itself would want to get revenge for their fallen warrior. *Well, according to our two small patrols, there have been no scents of Driftclan cats around the territory. So that is good, I guess...* Skystar thought and sighed, and then he rolled over in what used to be Birdstar's nest. "Hey, Skystar. You awake?" It was the meow of a certain tom coming from the entrance of his den.

It was Buzzardgaze, the cat Skystar chose as the new Vertexclan deputy.

Skystar looked up at his deputy. "Yes, I am. Did you and Smokedream recheck the borders?"

Buzzardgaze nodded. "Yep, no scent of Driftclan still!" He gave a smile as his tail lashed.

"Good, you may go rest if you wish."

"Okay!" Buzzardgaze would leave Skystar's den, but he turned around. "Hey, Skystar?"

Skystar looked up again. "Yes?"

"Are you doing okay? A lot has happened, and I feel like it's all getting thrown on you. I just want to make sure you are alright." He meowed.

It surprised the Vertexclan leader at how much his clanmate cared for him. "U-Uh, of course! I am perfectly fine. Thank you for asking." He meowed back and gave a slight smile.

"Okay! See you later, then!" Buzzardgaze turned back around and left the den.

Skystar sighed. Buzzardgaze would make for a magnificent Vertexclan leader one day. Skystar didn't feel like he was doing a good job, even though he's only been a leader for two moons. *Should I have a patrol look for Shredflash? No... That's too dangerous...* The Vertexclan leader heaved another sigh and laid his head back down. He needed some more time to think.

*

"I'm an evil Driftclan cat! And I will get you!" It was a small mew from a grey she-kit as she gave a playful growl towards a cream and fawn tom.

"Not if I have anything to do about it, fish-breath!" The tom-kit growled and crouched a bit.

"Come here!" she pounced onto him as they wrestled with each other.

As they continued playing their minor game, another she-kit with golden fur looked at the other two kits playing and then quickly nuzzled back against her mother's belly. The grey she-kit got up and looked over. "Scorchwatcher, I want Marigoldkit to play with us!" she mewed.

Scorchwatcher looked down at her kit against her belly. Marigoldkit was shaking a bit. "Do you want to play with Emberkit and Lionkit?" She licked Marigoldkit's head.

Marigoldkit looked up at her mother and then whiffed her head no.

"Aw, come on! Why? It's super fun!" Lionkit mewed as he padded closer to Marigoldkit.

"Yeah!" Emberkit added.

"Lionkit, Emberkit. If your sister does not want to play, then there is no reason to force her. How about you go play with Lightningkit and Rainkit?" Scorchwatcher meowed.

Lightningkit and Rainkit were laying next to their mother, Cloudthorn. The two tom-kits got up as they heard their names. "Cloudthorn, can we play with them?" It was Lightningkit who spoke up.

"Yes, you both can." She meowed and licked her fur.

"Yay!" Lightningkit exclaimed as he and Rainkit padded over to Lionkit and Emberkit.

"Aw, but you two are *weird* and look the same!" Emberkit mewed.

"Emberkit! Be nice!" Scorchwatcher said.

"We are not! Isn't that right Rainkit?" Lightningkit mewed to his brother.

Rainkit only shrugged.

"Fine, you two can play with us, but you can be the Driftclan cats!" Emberkit said.

"Okay!" Lightningkit replied.

"How about you four play right outside the Nursery?" Cloudthorn suggested.

"Good idea!" Lionkit and Emberkit mewed in unison and ran out of the Nursery. Lightningkit and Rainkit followed behind.

"Don't play too rough!" Scorchwatcher called, then the four kits ran outside.

Marigoldkit looked up again and watched as the other kits left the Nursery. She felt safer and warmer by her mother's side.

Chapter 2

Shellstar wanted to find that Vertexclan cat Shredflash, not because he wanted to kill him, but because he wanted to question him for his actions. Why would he kill Icejaw and Blizzardfluff? Did he do it for Vertexclan? Did he do it for himself? Did he do it for another cat? Those questions pondered Shellstar's mind as he watched his clan from his den. He saw as his clanmate Dampbreeze was padding up to him; he seemed to have a serious look on his face. Shellstar smiled at him, "Hello, Dampbreeze." He meowed.

"Hello, Shellstar." He meowed back, his right ear twitching.

"Do you need anything?"

"Well, I wanted to ask you something if you don't mind..."

"I don't at all Dampbreeze." the leader mewed, "Ask away."

"I want to be part of any patrol that finds any traces of Shredflash, if that's okay with you?"

"But, why? Water washed the last trace of his scent away. Featherdrip and I have decided that we will stop looking for that cat." Shellstar said.

"H-He killed your clanmates... He killed my mate! Don't you want revenge? Don't you want Shredflash to suffer?" Dampbreeze growled lowly.

"Dampbreeze, stop this at once! Killing another cat for revenge is not a way to solve things!"

"I never said I wanted to kill-"

Shellstar put his tail on Dampbreeze's maw. "You may not have said it, but I can see it in your eyes, Dampbreeze. You want to kill him yourself. We cannot do anything about Shredflash anymore, it's been two moons since the last sighting of him and if he hasn't come

back by now, then there's nothing we can do," He meowed.

Dampbreeze removed Shellstar's tail off his maw. "He can't get away with this, though... I want him gone!" Tears were falling down the tom's face now as he looked at his leader.

"I understand how you feel, but killing will not make things any easier for either clan. Blizzardfluff is in a better place now, and she wouldn't want you to do this."

Dampbreeze looked down at his paws in sadness as his tears fell onto the ground. He said nothing more.

"Go to the Warriors' den and get some rest, Dampbreeze. You need it."

Dampbreeze turned around and muttered something before he headed back to the warriors' den.

Shellstar worried for Dampbreeze. He hoped he wouldn't try to find Shredflash on his own.

He couldn't risk losing another clanmate.

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"Mistkit, I'm bored. Can we play?" A brown and gold-furred she-kit mewed to her brother and prodded her paw against his side.

Mistkit groaned. "No Hollowkit! I was sleeping... We can play later!"

"Aw, come on please!!" Hollowkit begged and prodded him some more.

There was another she-kit was behind their mother, Rushstreak. She had white fur as she came from behind her. "Mistkit, we will play a new game!" she mewed.

Mistkit then hopped up quickly. "A new game?"

The white-furred she-kit gave a smile. "Yep! I don't have a name for it yet, but we just explore around camp!"

"That sounds fun!" Mistkit gave a wide smile.

Rushstreak looked at her three kits, "Ripplekit, I hope you're not trying to get in any trouble..." She licked her head.

"No, I'm not! I just want to explore around camp!" Ripplekit exclaimed.

Rushstreak sighed, "Okay, you three can, but don't be out for too long. You know how worried Sandcoat gets..." she meowed.

All three kits nodded and then ran out of the Nursery.

"What do we do now?" Hollowkit questioned.

"Uh, let's go to the elders' den first!" Ripplekit mewed and ran over to the elders' den, along with Mistkit and Hollowkit. The three stood out in front of it. "Hollowkit, you go in first and see what's up!" Ripplekit mewed.

"Okay!" she replied happily and trotted into the elders' den.

Mistkit would go in there, but Ripplekit stopped him in his tracks. "Come on, move Ripplekit! I want to go in too!"

Ripplekit shook her head, "Mistkit... There's something important I need to tell you..."

"What is it?" He tilted his head to the side.

"It's about your mother..."

"It's about our mother, Rushstreak?" Mistkit questioned.

"No! Rushstreak is-"

"Hey!" A loud meow came from inside the elders' den, cutting Ripplekit off.

"Come meet Tansytail, she's so cool!" It was the voice of Hollowkit.

Mistkit's eyes widened and his ears perked up. "Really?!" He ran into the elders' den.

Ripplekit gave a heavy sigh and padded in.

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Later, Mistkit, Ripplekit, and Hollowkit came out of the elders' den. Tansytail had told them the story of how she lost her eye.

"Do you think I could fight a fox?" Mistkit mewed.

"You probably wouldn't last a heartbeat!" Hollowkit stuck her tongue out at her littermate.

"Says you!" He replied.

Ripplekit was quiet as they headed back to the Nursery.

"What about you, Ripplekit? Do you think I can fight a fox?"

"Huh? Oh uh, yeah sure..." She looked back down at her paws.

"See! At least Ripplekit thinks so." Mistkit said to Hollowkit.

Hollowkit looked away with a pout on her face. The three kits were at the Nursery now, they all padded inside. Rushstreak looked up and saw them. "Well, how was your brief adventure?" she meowed.

"It was great! We got to see a lot and Tansytail told us a story!" Hollowkit mewed.

"Yeah, it was about how she fought a fox and lost her eye!" Mistkit added.

Ripplekit only nodded.

"Well, I'm glad you all had fun, but it's time for your pelts to be cleaned," She smiled and then picked up Hollowkit first by the scruff and set her down by her and cleaned her.

"Aw, Rushstreak!" she protested.

Mistkit looked at Ripplekit. "Didn't you have something to tell me back at the elders' den Ripplekit?"

"No, it was nothing... What's that behind you?" She mewed.

"Huh?" Mistkit turned around, but once he turned back, Ripplekit had pounced onto her brother and pinned him. "Hah, I got you!"

"No fair!" Mistkit said.

"Ripplekit, get off of your brother and come get your fur cleaned." Rushstreak meowed.

"Fine..." She got up and padded over to her mother.

Chapter 3

Nova didn't worry about anything at the moment. Except she needed an apprentice! Nova wasn't too old yet, but eventually, she would move to the elders' den and wouldn't be able to take care of her clan like she would wish to. *Scorchwatcher and Cloudthorn had their kits. Maybe one will be interested in being a medicine cat!* Nova thought as she padded out of the medicine den. She watched as four kits played outside of the Nursery. *Aren't there... Five kits?* Nova questioned to herself and then padded over to the playing kits.

"Come back here, you smelly Driftclan cat!" It was the mew of Lionkit. He was running towards what was Lightningkit or Rainkit. Nova couldn't tell since both toms looked like each other and you could only tell by their paws.

"Never!" The mew sounded like Lightningkit.

Rainkit doesn't speak much anyway... Nova thought, then padded past all the kits into the Nursery. The two she-cats lifted their heads to see the Vertexclan medicine cat.

"Hello, Nova." Scorchwatcher meowed.

"Hi, Nova!" Cloudthorn said.

"Hello to the two of you. Just checking in on things. I saw your kits were playing outside, but I noticed there was one missing." she meowed.

"You mean Marigoldkit?" Scorchwatcher moved her tail to reveal the golden-furred she-kit, who lifted her head when she heard her name.

"Yeah!" Nova smiled and padded closer to her. "Why don't you want to play with the other kits?"

Marigoldkit looked up at Nova. Her mew was soft. "I-I just don't

want to..."

"Aw, well that's okay..." *This is my chance!* Nova thought excitedly.

"Well, Marigoldkit. Do you want to come to the medicine den with me? You can look at all the pretty herbs I have?" The medicine cat asked.

Marigoldkit looked up at her mother for approval.

"Go on, I don't mind." Scorchwatcher smiled at her kit.

Marigoldkit got up from beside her mother and followed Nova out of the Nursery.

As Nova and Marigoldkit passed by the other kits playing, only one noticed where they were going. It was Rainkit. Before he could attempt to follow them, his brother Lightningkit stepped in front of him. "We need to escape!" He meowed to him and ran away. Rainkit sighed and followed Lightningkit.

In the medicine den, Nova had shown Marigoldkit certain herbs and what they did. Marigoldkit was getting more and more interested in the work Nova did at the time she spent in the medicine den.

"So, Marigoldkit." Nova started. "How would you like to become my apprentice when you are old enough to become one?"

Marigoldkit thought to herself for a second. Becoming a warrior already sounded scary enough to her. If she was a medicine cat, she wouldn't have to deal with fighting or hunting at all. Marigoldkit looked back up at Nova and gave a smile.

"I'll take that as a yes!" Nova purred happily. "I shall notify Skystar about it right away! You may go back to the Nursery now." She meowed and padded out of the medicine den along with Marigoldkit.

Nova headed to Skystar's den, and Marigoldkit turned to see the face of Rainkit. She jumped slightly and then blushed. Rainkit looked away and said nothing as the golden-furred she-kit quickly padded back into the Nursery.

Rainkit was unsure of some things he was thinking about for now.

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A black she-cat sighed as she looked beyond the trees. She was certain that she could smell other scents than just her own, and her mother and fathers'.

"Fang, come back in here! You know how Shredflash gets..." There was a yell from another cat in a small cave.

"Coming, Eclipse!" Fang yelled back. She looked past the trees in front of her one more time before running to the small cave, then entering it. She saw a black she-cat lying in her nest.

Fang went over to her and laid herself out next to her. "Why does Shredflash get to go everywhere? It's so boring in here!" She exclaimed.

"You already know why."

"Because he's trying to protect us? I know that already! I'm just bored..."

Eclipse licked Fang's fur. "You're still young. You wouldn't be able to live out there on your own, anyway..."

Yes, I would! Fang thought in her head.

"What's so scary about these, "clans" anyway? Didn't Shredflash live in one?" She asked her mother.

"Yes, I did." A low meow came from the entrance of the cave.

It was Shredflash.

"Welcome back!" Eclipse meowed and touched noses with her mate as he came up to her.

"Why did you stop living in one?" Fang questioned.

"My clan betrayed me. They saw me as a dangerous cat, when I was

only trying to protect them from one that would harm more..." He meowed as he sat beside both his kit and mate.

"Who was that cat you protected them from?"

Shredflash sighed, then smiled and licked Fang's head. "That's not important. What is important is that you both should eat something. I caught a nice rabbit. I'll go pick it up from outside the cave now." He got up and padded out to get the piece of prey.

Fang wondered if her father hid something from her.

Chapter 4

Dampbreeze still wasn't happy at all. He couldn't be happy because of the cat that killed his mate. He was still out there somewhere. *Probably still killing cats...* Dampbreeze thought as he rolled over in his nest. The Driftclan warrior has had his mind only on killing Shredflash, but who could blame him for having hatred in his heart? He could just put it off and try his best to forget about all of it, but he didn't want to. *I will kill him if it's the last thing I do!* Dampbreeze thought and then lifted his head to see his brother Eagleswoop standing in front of him. "Hey, Dampbreeze," He meowed.

"Hi." Dampbreeze sat up and looked at his brother. "Do you need something from me?"

"No, I just want to make sure you're okay. You seem sadder, more than I've ever seen you..." Eagleswoop meowed.

Dampbreeze held back a smart remark. "Yeah... I'm still sad about Blizzardfluff... She didn't deserve to be killed..." He said.

Eagleswoop sat down by him. "She didn't at all, but she wouldn't want you to stay sad now, wouldn't she? She would want you to keep going for her!" Eagleswoop exclaimed.

That won't stop me from killing Shredflash when I find him... He thought. "You're right Eagleswoop, she would want me to, but I'm still sad about it..."

"I think Thistlewhisper and Otterpelt have a herb that can cheer you up! Do you want to come to the medicine den with me?" He asked.

A herb that can cheer me up? Dampbreeze's curiosity had peeked, "Uh, sure. Let's go." He meowed back and got up from his nest.

The two toms left the warriors' den and headed to the medicine den. Before they entered, Dampbreeze saw Mistkit heading into the

Nursery. Dampbreeze only sighed as he followed Eagleswoop into the medicine den. Once they entered, the two only saw their sister Thistlewhisper sniffing some herbs and putting them in different places.

"Hey, Thistlewhisper!" Eagleswoop meowed, causing the medicine cat to jump.

"O-Oh hi Eagleswoop! And Dampbreeze too!" She meowed back.

Dampbreeze only gave a slight nod to his sister.

"Need something? You both hurting somewhere?" Thistlewhisper gasped. "Don't tell me you're having kits with each other!"

"Of course not!" Eagleswoop said.

Thistlewhisper giggled, and Dampbreeze sighed.

"We're just here because Dampbreeze has been feeling down recently... Don't you have a herb that cheers cats up?" he asked.

"Oh! You mean the goatweed?" Thistlewhisper turned back around to all the medicinal herbs that there were. She moved some around.

"Where's Otterpelt?" Dampbreeze questioned.

"Oh! She went out to look for more herbs. I forgot what herbs they were, though." She meowed, turning around to have a certain plant in her maw.

She padded closer to Dampbreeze and dropped it in front of him. Dampbreeze sniffed it, it didn't have a smell at all. He then lapped it up with his tongue and chewed it. There wasn't a taste to it.

"You feel better yet?" Eagleswoop said.

"No, I feel the same-" Dampbreeze then felt like a wave of warmth and satisfaction hit him. He stood there with his eyes widened as the effect of the goatweed instantly took him.

Why... Do I feel so much better now? He thought and gave a smile.

"I think it worked!" Eagleswoop smiled. "Thanks Thistlewhisper!"

"Anytime, you can even take a little with you if you'd like Dampbreeze?"

Dampbreeze only gave a nod.

"Okay! I'll gather some for you to take." She went back over to the herbs and gathered some goatweed.

Dampbreeze only stared as his sister gathered the wonderful plant for him.

Maybe this plant was the answer to his problems.

*

Mistkit had a strange dream, a dream he was older than he was now. He was laying next to another cat, which he could only assume was his future mate in his dream.

But who was that cat? He thought to himself as he curled up against his mother. The only she-cats were in the clan that is as young as him were his sisters.

I definitely won't be mates with them! Mistkit looked at Ripplekit and Hollowkit as they slept, then stuck his tongue out at the thought.

"Oh, I didn't know you were awake Mistkit."

Mistkit looked up to see Rushstreak looking at him, "Yeah... I had a strange dream..." He mewed.

"What was it about?" She licked and clean his fur.

"It was about me, but I guess I was a warrior?"

"How is that strange?" Rushstreak meowed.

"I was mates with a cat that wasn't in our clan!" Mistkit exclaimed.

"That is strange!" The she-cat said and continued to clean his fur.

I guess it's nothing really to worry about... It makes little sense anyway, besides me becoming a skilled warrior, of course! He thought and smiled.

Chapter 5

Shredflash was always protecting his family now. He made sure every time he came back from hunting or making sure that there were no other cats around to harm them, he would go back into the small cave and check on his mate and kit. They were all holding up well, despite that they live in the wild and not in a clan. Shredflash would never go back to a clan. He hated both Vertexclan and Driftclan equally. *If only Birdstar understood what my mother and I went through...* He thought as he padded past some trees, looking for prey to find.

Well, he's probably dead now, my friend! A voice had echoed in his head.

"Keep in mind, Shred, that clan leaders have nine lives. He could have a few more. I never really knew how many he had..."

Does it matter now? You have what you want, Eclipse and Fang! Shred said.

Shredflash sighed as he stopped and went into a hunters' crouch and listened out for the prey he scented. He saw as a tiny mouse slowly crossed his vision. He then stomped on its tail and dug a claw into its back. "Looks like it was young..." He meowed to himself and picked it up with his maw.

You know... Shred started.

"Know what?" Shredflash's mew muffled because of the prey in his mouth.

That cat you killed a few moons ago on the Ocean Side. She had a mate.

"She did now?"

Yep, she kitted a moon before, I'm sure.

Shredflash stopped in his tracks. "How do you know this?"

I know a lot of things, my friend! It's like how I helped you find the cat was of danger to your kin. Shred echoed.

Shredflash sighed and continued to head back to the small cave. He wondered who that kit was and if he knew he killed his mother.

"Shred, do you think kit knows?"

Knows about what?

"I took his mothers' life."

Only time can tell my friend!

Shredflash sighed again as he got closer to the small cave. He went inside to see both Eclipse and Fang laying next to each other. "And the clan didn't believe him- oh hello, Shredflash!" Eclipse looked over at him and gave a smile. Fang only gave a small sigh.

"Were you two talking about my life in Vertexclan?" His eyes were cynical.

"Of course not!" Eclipse meowed.

"Yes," mewed Fang.

Eclipse gave a heavy sigh.

*

"Eclipse!" Fang prodded on her mothers' side.

"Yes?" She looked at her kit.

"Can you *please* tell me about Shredflash's life in his clan?"

Eclipse sighed, then gave a brief smile. "Fine, fine, but I won't tell you too much though."

"Yay!" Fang sat up.

"Your father used to live in a clan called Vertexclan, a very strong, but small, clan that lives on a small mountain close to the ocean."

she started.

The ocean! Fang thought.

"His mother cared for him a lot, but his father wasn't so great at all."

"Why is that?" Fang's head tilted to the side.

"Shredflash's father, Blacksting, was a terrible cat. When Shredflash was only an apprentice, the leader assigned his father to train him. Blacksting didn't follow the normal ways of training at all." Eclipse meowed.

Fang continued to listen.

"Instead of training him, Blacksting tortured your father."

Fang nearly jumped onto her paws. "Tortured?!"

Eclipse nodded. "Yes, he nearly drowned multiple times, suffocated, attacked him with other cats."

"That's terrible!" Fang frowned.

"Shredflash almost died of starvation, but his mother Dustshine saved him before he did. But Dustshine knew what would happen if she interfered." Eclipse paused for a little "Blacksting would kill her."

"What?!"

"Because of Dustshine interfering with Blacksting's, "training", Blacksting killed her right in front of Shredflash's eyes..."

"Shredflash..." Fang felt sympathy for her father.

"Shredflash then realized something after that happened, he had to murder Blacksting. If he didn't, Blacksting would have done something terrible for sure..."

"Did he do it?"

"Yes, one day while Blacksting was sleeping, Shredflash attacked

him. A few heartbeats later, Blacksting wasn't moving. He was dead," Eclipse said.

Good riddance! Fang thought.

"Shredflash's clanmates saw, though. The clan leader came to confront him and Shredflash tried his best to explain what happened and how much of a terrible cat Blacksting was."

"Did they believe him?"

Eclipse shook her head, "No, and the clan didn't believe him-" She stopped as she saw a cat pad in through the entrance of the cave.

"Oh hello, Shredflash!"

Fang quickly snapped her head to see her father standing there with a tiny mouse in his maw.

"Were you two talking about my life in Vertexclan?" His mew was low.

"Of course not!"

"Yes!" Fang mewed back.

Eclipse sighed as Shredflash padded over to the two and sat next to them. "What have you told her?" He asked Eclipse.

"I've only gotten to where after you killed your father..." she replied.

"Ah, well, if she wants to know, then continue."

Eclipse nodded. "The clan didn't believe him, and he was angry. So he lashed out and killed the leader of Vertexclan."

"Really?!" the kit gasped and looked up at her father.

Shredflash only nodded.

"He then ran away from his clan. He couldn't trust them anymore. About a moon later, he met me," Eclipse meowed.

"And another moon later, she had you in her belly. I told myself that I would protect you and her for as long as I live," Shredflash meowed and licked the top of Fang's head.

"I'm sorry that all happened to you..." Fang frowned and leaned against her father.

"It's alright Fang, it's all in the past now. I'm just happy that I have you and your mother now." He smiled and purred.

Fang smiled back and purred. *Shredflash is the greatest!* She thought.

Chapter 6

Mistkit jolted awake. He couldn't feel his littermates or Rushstreak by him. He looked around to see tiny but bright stars all around him. He quickly got up and looked around again, "Where am I?" Mistkit questioned as he noticed outside of what he thought was the Nursery was brighter. He gave one last look around at the stars and padded forward and out of the Nursery.

"Woah!" was all he could get out as he saw the ground, the trees, and even the bushes that were filled with stars. *I think I might know where I am!* Mistkit thought.

"You are in Starclan, young one," Mistkit heard a meow from what sounded like a she-cat in front of him. He then looked straightforward to see that she-cat. Her pelt had stars in it, but it looked like it used to be fluffy and maybe white.

"Starclan! Am I dead?" the kit mewed.

The she-cat giggled. "Of course not! I've just brought you here to tell you something important." she meowed back.

Mistkit gasped. "Important? Why would you tell me then?"

"This will help you decide on how you want to live your life." she meowed.

Decide on how I want to live? He thought.

"I already know how I want to live! I want to be one of the best warriors of Driftclan one day and make Sandcoat proud!" Mistkit puffed out his chest.

The starry she-cat smiled. "Really now?"

"Yes!"

"You remind me so much of... Ah, nevermind that... You must keep

this in mind, young Mistkit." she started, "Trust yourself and trust what your heart says to do. Then you will find out how you want to live," she meowed, then gained a bigger smile on her face.

"Trust my heart?" Mistkit questioned. He would ask what that meant, but the starry she-cat slowly faded away. "W-Wait!"

"You will find out what it means in due time, Mistkit..." Her mew echoed as everything around Mistkit went dark.

*

Mistkit's eyes shot open as he jolted awake. He looked around to find out he was back in the Nursery with his mother and littermates.

Why do I keep having these weird dreams? And what did that cat mean by trusting me and my heart? He thought and shifted slightly in the nest, pushing into Hollowkit, who opened her eyes and then yawned. "Is it sunup yet...?" she mewed.

"No, you fish-brain!" Mistkit whispered back to her.

"Okay." Hollowkit instantly closed her eyes and went back to sleep.

It was still moonhigh as the moonlight shone into the Nursery. *I should probably... Try to get more sleep, I guess...* Mistkit thought and forced his eyes closed.

He hoped he wouldn't have another dream like that again.

*

Ripplekit opened her eyes to the sunlight shining on her face. She squinted at them, then yawned as she woke up. "Good to see you awake, Ripplekit," it was the mew of her mother Rushstreak, who was cleaning her fur. Ripplekit then saw Hollowkit and Mistkit still sleeping. "Rushstreak?" mewed Ripplekit.

"Hm?"

"Can I go see Sandcoat in the Warriors' den, please?" she asked.

"Sure, but don't stay there for too long, okay?"

"I won't!" Ripplekit got up and stretched. Then she padded out of the Nursery.

As she went outside, she saw some of her clanmates either sitting out in the open or chatting with each other. Ripplekit saw as the Driftclan deputy Featherdrip organize the dawn patrol; she recognized only Eelspeck out of the three cats were in front of the deputy. The kit continued her way to the warriors' den. As she entered, she saw Sandcoat waking up. Two other warriors were sleeping, but Ripplekit couldn't tell who they were. She padded up to her father. "Hello, Sandcoat!", She mewed.

Sandcoat stared at her and blinked a few times before he realized Ripplekit was in front of her. "Oh, Hi Ripplekit... Does Rushstreak know you're here?" he yawned.

"Yes, I wanted to talk to you about something though."

"Sure! Come sit by me then." He sat up and pointed his tail right next to him.

Ripplekit sat by her father; she sighed.

"What's up?" Sandcoat meowed.

"Well... If there was something important you had to tell a cat, but it would make them sad, would you still tell them, anyway?" She asked, frowning.

"Hmm... How sad would it make them?"

"Sad enough to get angry."

"How angry?"

"Angry enough to hate their clan."

"Why would they hate their clan?"

Ripplekit shrugged.

Sandcoat put his tail around her. "Maybe it would be best for you to tell whoever you need to tell that important thing. The longer you keep them from knowing, the more it'll hurt later." he meowed.

Ripplekit looked up at her father and smiled. "Thanks Sandcoat!"

He smiled back. "Yep, now get back to Rushstreak before she worries."

"Okay!" She got up and ran out of the warriors' den.

Ripplekit would find the right time to tell Mistkit the truth.

Chapter 7

Fang woke up with a jolt. "E-Eclipse? Is it morning yet?" She yawned. Then she looked around to find out that neither Eclipse nor Shredflash was laying next to her. "Eclipse? Shredflash?" she mewed for her parents. Fang noticed that there were few stars around her in the cave. "If this isn't the cave... Then where am I?" she questioned out loud.

"I see you're awake, young Fang!" an unfamiliar voice came from outside the cave.

"Huh? Who said that?" she replied, hopping up onto her paws.

"Come out here and see!" the voice seemed cheerful.

Fang hesitated for a little before slowly padding out. She saw a tom standing a few pawsteps away from her. She couldn't identify what he looked like, but he seemed young. "Who are you and where am I?" she hissed at him and her fur stuck up on end.

"Woah! Calm down there, I am of no harm to you," He replied, now giving a smile.

Fang was slightly calmer now. His voice made her feel joyful.

"My name is Shred, you could say that I am... Sort of your kin!" He mewed.

My kin? She thought. "Okay, *Shred*, where am I?"

"Well, we are in your mind, of course!"

"In my mind? Why did you bring me here?"

"I have to show you something!" Shred meowed excitedly. Then a minor star appeared by him and it grew. Fang came closer to him and saw the star was showing what looked like to be her.

"Is that me?" Fang mewed.

"It would seem so!" Shred replied.

Fang looked much older in the vision, and she was with another tom. They were laying next to each other peacefully. "Who is that cat next to me?"

Shred sighed. "Sadly, I do not know, but that cat is from one clan. The clan calls itself Driftclan, I'm sure you have heard of the clans before."

"Yes, I have," Fang nodded.

"That's good, but I know what this means for you, Fang. You must meet with that cat, it's your destiny," Shred said to her.

"My destiny?" She repeated.

"Mhm! You should try to sneak away at moonhigh and go to the Ocean Side so you can meet him," Shred suggested.

"But what if I get in trouble?"

"Oh, don't worry about that. I can talk to Shredflash!"

"O-Okay..." Fang was a little unsure about this, but if it was her destiny to meet this cat, then she will do what it takes to meet him. Everything around her suddenly disappeared as she woke up back in the cave next to Eclipse. It looked like Shredflash disappeared. Fang got up and padded out the cave for a bit. The sun was still up, but it wasn't as high as it was before. She padded back in and sat down next to her mother.

Hopefully, when moonhigh arrives, the other cat will know to meet me next to the Ocean Side! Fang thought and smiled.

*

Nova needed to see Otterpelt, and soon. It's been a while since the two medicine cats have seen each other and visited Starclan. *How could I ever forget? I hope Otterpelt remembers we need to see Starclan*

soon too! She thought as she paced around the medicine den. Nova paused for a moment as she noticed a pair of eyes staring at her from the entrance of the den. The Vertexclan medicine cat looked over to see a golden-furred kit staring at her with a worried look. "Oh! Uh... Hi, Marigoldkit!" she meowed.

"A-Are you okay, Nova?" She mewed back.

"Of course! I was just thinking that's all."

"Okay... I wanted to know if-" the kit paused for a moment, "you could show me what some more herbs do...?" she asked.

Nova gave a wide smile. "Sure! Come right on in and I'll show some!" Nova flicked her tail, inviting Marigoldkit in.

Marigoldkit smiled and padded in. Nova was happy that Skystar allowed her to take Marigoldkit as an apprentice soon. That way she wouldn't worry about Vertexclan not having a medicine cat in the future. *I must go visit Driftclan, if Skystar lets me and lets Otterpelt to go with me to the Ocean Side.* Nova thought, as she looked through some herbs with Marigoldkit.

Chapter 8

"Today is the day!" Mistkit meowed excitedly to his sisters.

"I know, I'm super excited!" Hollowkit mewed back with a smile on her face.

Ripplekit only nodded as she watched Mistkit and Hollowkit bounce around. Rushstreak sighed, "Both of you calm down before I have to straighten your pelts again," she meowed. Both Hollowkit and Mistkit mewed, "Aw!" before calming themselves and sitting back down.

"I wonder who my mentor will be?" Mistkit mewed and gave a big smile.

"Who knows? I would like Shellstar to be my mentor!" Hollowkit mewed back.

"Shellstar wouldn't want to mentor you! You would be a terrible apprentice!" Mistkit gave a pouty face and looked away. "I would be better!"

"Nuh-uh, you would be terrible!" Hollowkit stuck her tongue out at her brother.

Rushstreak and Ripplekit both sighed.

There was then a loud yell that came from outside the Nursery.

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" The voice yelled.

Mistkit gasped. *Yes!* He thought and ran outside the Nursery, with his sisters and mother behind him. There stood Shellstar, standing by the Tide Pool.

"I have gathered you all here today because there will be three new apprentices." He meowed.

"Mistkit, Ripplekit, and Hollowkit, please step forward." the leader said and the three kits did as they were told. Mistkit looking very excited.

"Hollowkit. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Hollowpaw. Your mentor will be Gullstalk. I hope Gullstalk will pass down all he knows on to you." Shellstar signaled his tail for Gullstalk to pad over next to Hollowpaw. And he did.

"Ripplekit. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Ripplepaw. Your mentor will be Lionsplash. I hope Lionsplash will pass down all she knows on to you," Shellstar meowed and Lionsplash came up next to Ripplepaw.

The Driftclan leader set his eyes on Mistkit. "And Mistkit. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Mistpaw. Your mentor will be Dampbreeze. I hope Dampbreeze will pass down all he knows on to you." Dampbreeze gained a look of surprise as he slowly padded up next to Mistpaw. His eyes seemed to go dark. In the crowd of Driftclan cats, Ruststreak had a worried look as Dampbreeze went up next to him. Ripplepaw seemed worried.

"Gullstalk, Lionsplash, and Dampbreeze. You have all received great training from your previous mentors. I expect you all to pass down what you know to your apprentices." He meowed.

"You all may dip your noses in the Tide Pool."

The six cats dipped their noses and then took them out.

"Hollowpaw! Ripplepaw! Mistpaw!" The rest of Driftclan cheered for their new apprentices.

As the clan dispersed, the new apprentices talked to their new mentors. "This will be great!" Hollowpaw exclaimed to Gullstalk.

"It sure will be!" Gullstalk replied.

"I hope you're ready, Ripplepaw." Lionsplash meowed, and Ripplepaw only nodded.

Mistpaw gave a wide smile to Dampbreeze. "So, when are we starting? I'm ready to start now!" He meowed.

Dampbreeze stared at Mistpaw. His smile reminded him of Blizzardfluff. He shook his head quickly. "Uh, we won't be starting today, we'll start tomorrow!" he meowed back and quickly headed back to the Warriors' den.

Mistpaw turned his head to the side, confused at Dampbreeze's actions. *I wonder why he went off so quick, I could've spoken with him longer!* He thought.

*

Go to the Ocean Side... A voice echoed in Mistpaw's head. His eyes shot open as he realized it was dark in the apprentices' den. He quickly got up and padded outside to see the moon high in the sky, with the stars spilling all around it. Mistpaw had a dream that a cat was standing by the Ocean Side. He felt like he had to go there.

I don't know what it is... But something is telling me to go there so I can meet that cat! Mistpaw thought and ran out of Driftclan camp. A set of eyes was watching from the apprentices' den.

*

Once he was near the ocean, he could feel the sand starting to get under his pads. He stopped as he noticed something. A black cat was sitting by the Ocean Side. The cat was staring at the moon.

That must be the cat! He thought and began padding up to them.

The black cat twisted their head to lock eyes with Mistpaw. It was a she-cat with burgundy eyes.

Chapter 9

Do you know you have to teach Fang how to hunt and fight right Shredflash? Shred echoed.

"Yes, but-"

But what? She has to learn eventually, my friend. You won't always be by her side forever.

"I know! It's just that I'm worried that she'll get hurt by me..." Shredflash sighed.

But if she gets hurt, she'll learn from it, right? She'll learn that she needs to get better and she will get better in time.

Shredflash didn't respond as he clawed a rabbit's back and watched it fall over.

I know you don't like your daughter being hurt, but it's the only way you can train her for now, Shredflash.

Shredflash picked the dead rabbit up in his maw and quietly headed back to the small cave.

*

Shredflash padded into the cave to see Eclipse and Fang sleeping. He dropped the piece of prey and padded over to the two. Eclipse was the first to open her eyes and look up at her mate. "Welcome back, Shredflash." she yawned. A few heartbeats later, Fang yawned as she woke up and looked up at her father with tired eyes.

"Fang." he started with a stern mew.

Fang gained a worried look, as she didn't know what Shredflash would say next, but that look soon disappeared as she noticed her father smirking. "I will teach you how to hunt, fight, and whatever else needed for the future." he meowed.

Fang instantly hopped up on her paws and smiled brightly. "Really?!"

Shredflash nodded. "Yes, after some thinking, I've decided that training you would be best. Since I will not be around all the time to protect you and Eclipse."

She gave an excited squeal as Shredflash told her this.

I'm glad you came to your senses, friend! Shred echoed in Shredflash's head.

*

"Oh, don't worry Skystar, I'm sure you can do this! There may be a lot of apprentices to appoint, but I believe you can do it!" Buzzardgaze meowed to his leader.

"Thanks, Buzzardgaze... Maybe I'm worrying too much, but will we have enough warriors to mentor them?"

"I remember you told me that Nova is taking Marigoldkit as her apprentice. So that leaves us with..." Buzzardgaze thought for a second. "Four left! And we have four warriors at the moment, right?"

Skystar nodded.

"Well, that's great then! Let's get this going, shall we?" Buzzardgaze smiled and headed out of Skystar's den. He flicked his tail and beckoned for Skystar to follow him. Skystar smiled and followed his deputy. Once he got outside, he took a deep breath in, then out.

"Cats of Vertexclan!" he started. "Please gather around the Sharp Stone for a clan meeting!" He meowed loudly.

Scorchwatcher, Cloudthorn, and all of their kits appeared out of the Nursery. Crownight and Rockcreek peeked their heads out of the Warriors' den, Smokedream and Stagwhisper were already roaming around camp and then stopped when they heard Skystar's voice. Every cat padded on over to the Sharp Stone.

"I shall appoint four new apprentices!" He yelled to his clan. "First, Emberkit and Lionkit, please step forward."

Both kits excitedly padded up with smiles on their faces.

"You are both of age to become apprentices. From this day on, until you both are of age to become warriors, you will be known as Emberpaw and Lionpaw and your mentors will be Smokedream and Rockcreek." Skystar meowed.

Smokedream padded up next to Emberpaw, and Rockcreek padded up next to Lionpaw.

"Now, Lightningkit and Rainkit, please step forward."

The brothers did as they were told and padded up.

"You are both of age to become apprentices. From this day on, until you are of age to become warriors, you will be known as Lightningpaw and Rainpaw and your mentors will be Stagwhisper and Crownight."

Stagwhisper padded next to Lightningpaw and Crownight with Rainpaw.

Skystar smiled. "Your previous mentors have taught you well and I expect you all to pass down what you know to your apprentices." he meowed.

The warriors nodded as they touched noses with their apprentices.

"Emberpaw! Lionpaw! Lightningpaw! Rainpaw!" The clan cheered for their new apprentices.

"The clan meeting is now over." Skystar added and sighed relief as he headed back to his den. Buzzardgaze ran up to him.

"You did great!" He purred.

"Thanks, it wasn't so bad." the leader replied with a smile.

By the medicine den, Marigoldkit looked up at Nova.

"Don't worry, I'll take you to the Ocean Side to make you an apprentice soon!" Nova smiled at her.

Marigoldkit smiled back. She was excited to become Nova's apprentice.

*

Fang opened her eyes. It was dark in the small cave due to it being moonhigh. She got up slowly so she wouldn't wake up her parents. She then quietly left the cave so she could go to the Ocean Side.

It took her a little of time before she made it there. No other cat was around. Maybe I should wait? Fang thought to herself and got closer to the ocean. She sat down and stared off into the distance of the ocean. It was a nice and blue color under the moonlight and the stars. *The ocean is so pretty!* Fang smiled at the thought.

A few heartbeats later, she could hear pawsteps coming closer to her in the sand. She twisted her head to meet the gaze of what looked like a tawny tom with orange-red eyes.

"You're that cat I saw in my dream!" the tom exclaimed.

"I am?" Fang questioned.

He must be the one I meet with! She thought excitedly.

"Yeah! We were laying together or something... It's so vague now!" he mewed.

"I was told to meet you here by another cat. Were you told too?" Fang said.

"A voice in another dream told me to come here."

"Hmm... What's your name?"

"I'm Mistpaw! Future warrior of Driftclan!" He meowed proudly.

He's from the clans like Shredflash! "Nice to meet you Mistpaw, I'm Fang," she meowed back.

"Fang? Are you not from a clan?"

The she-cat shook her head. "No, I live with my father and mother, away from the clans. My father used to live in Vertexclan, though."

"Really? That's super cool!" Mistpaw smiled widely.

Fang giggled and blushed a little at the compliment. "Y-Yeah..."

Mistpaw padded next to Fang and sat down by her. "Why do you think we were told to meet here?"

Fang's fur felt hot as Mistpaw was next to her. Surely she couldn't have caught feelings for this clan cat already? They've just met!

"I don't know, but it might be important for the future," she mewed back.

"Yeah!" Mistpaw looked at her with a calm smile, which caused her to blush more.

"W-Well, I should get going now... Can we meet again soon? Maybe tomorrow night?" Fang asked.

"Yes, of course! I would love to see you again!" Mistpaw replied, and purred.

Fang's heart raced as he said that to him. "Great! Well, I'll see you till then." she mewed and padded back to the small cave.

"Goodbye!" Mistpaw ran back towards where he came from.

Fang turned around and watched as Mistpaw ran. She turned back around and sighed, but then she noticed brief splashes of blood on the sand.

She chose not to mind it at all.

Chapter 10

Shredflash smiled as he saw Fang jump in excitement. The tom was also excited; he will train his daughter to become strong like he was. He would train her to win almost any fight, and to catch prey for herself, too. "When will we start?" Fang meowed.

"We will start tomorrow." Shredflash replied, still smiling. Then he watched Fang jump around more.

Shredflash, go outside the cave. Your family is in danger once more.

The toms' eyes lit up as he heard this in his head. "I'll be back soon." he meowed to Eclipse and Fang, then left the small cave. Once he got outside, he padded behind a tree.

"How are they in danger?" He questioned.

A cat is going to the Ocean Side, they are from Driftclan. She has brown fur, and she'll be with three other cats, but you only have to get rid of the brown one. Shred echoed.

Shredflash sighed. He didn't like killing cats, but he did it to protect his family and nothing else. He hoped that no other Driftclan cats would try to harm them after this one, though. "When will they be there?" Shredflash questioned.

They should either be arriving there now or heading there soon. I suggest you hide somewhere when you get there and wait to strike! Shred said.

"Alright," Shredflash replied and padded off to the Ocean Side.

*

It excited Marigoldkit to become Nova's apprentice, but not as excited as Nova herself. Nova has had a wide smile on her face since she woke up today. The medicine cat was pacing around in the medicine den, but it was out of excitement and not out of anger.

"This will be great! She'll become the greatest medicine cat and I won't have to worry anymore when I-" Nova then noticed that the golden-furred kit was still in the medicine den.

"Wh-when you what, Nova?" Marigoldkit mewed.

"Oh, nothing! Just things for the future. Now, you ready to go?"

Marigoldkit nodded.

"Great!" Nova padded towards the entrance of the den and flicked her tail, signaling the kit to follow her.

They got to the entrance of the camp, but before they left, Scorchwatcher padded up behind them and got Nova's attention. "What's up, Scorchwatcher?" she asked when she turned around.

"Please let *nothing* happen to my kit." She meowed and gave an angry look to the medicine cat.

"I won't!" Nova laughed nervously.

"Great!~" Scorchwatcher smiled and padded away.

Better get this over with soon then! Nova thought, then she and Marigoldkit left the camp.

*

Nova and Marigoldkit went to the entrance of Driftclan territory and waited for two certain cats to come out. A few heartbeats later they both saw a brown she-cat and a white she-cat pad out and come closer to them.

"Hi, Nova! It's nice to see you!" the brown she-cat meowed, "This must be Marigoldkit," she looked at Marigoldkit and smiled.

"H-Hello..." she mewed quietly.

"Nice to see you too Otterpelt, and Thistlewhisper too! Look at how much you've grown! I remember you were just an apprentice!" Nova exclaimed.

"Hah, not that long ago..." Thistlewhisper blushed a little and looked away.

"Well, Marigoldkit, meet Thistlewhisper! She's another medicine cat from Driftclan," Nova meowed.

"Hi," she mewed and smiled.

"Hello," Marigoldkit mewed back and gave a slight smile.

"We all ready to go?" Otterpelt asked.

"Yep! The Ocean Side isn't that far at all," Nova meowed.

The four cats made their way to the Ocean Side, but as they headed onto the sand, they didn't notice the pair of eyes that were now staring the cats down from behind in a bush.

Once they got near the ocean, Nova and Marigoldkit got a little closer. "You ready, Marigoldkit?" she asked.

She nodded in response.

"Alright, is it your wish to enter the mysteries of Starclan as a medicine cat?"

Marigoldkit nodded, "Yes, it is."

"Warriors of Starclan, I present you with this apprentice. They have chosen the path of a medicine cat. Grant them your wisdom and insight so they may understand your ways and heal their clan." Nova looked up at the sky. Then she looked back down at Marigoldkit.

"From this moment, until you receive your full medicine cat name, your name will be Marigoldpaw," she added.

"Marigoldpaw! Marigoldpaw! Marigoldpaw!" Otterpelt and Thistlewhisper chanted.

Marigoldpaw smiled and blushed.

"Now, we must touch our noses with the ocean and visit Starclan," Nova laid in the sand and touched her nose with the water, Marigoldpaw did the same and they both closed their eyes.

The two Driftclan cats were smiling, but not for long when they heard pawsteps behind them and saw a black tom stand in front of them.

*

Shredflash watched as the four cats padded up to the Ocean Side. "When do I attack?"

Soon.

Shredflash saw one cat moving their maw for a while and then laid onto the sand, along with a golden-furred cat.

Go now.

Shredflash hopped out of the bush and padded up to the two cats that were standing. He got close enough to where they could hear his pawsteps and they both turned around, now with looks of terror on their faces.

"Otterpelt... Is this who you were telling me about...?" the white she-cat meowed.

Otterpelt nodded, "Thistlewhisper, just stay back. What do you want Shredflash?"

Shredflash sighed, "Nothing important, just your life."

Thistlewhisper was shivering.

"Why do you want my life?"

"You're a danger to my family, so I must get rid of you."

"I didn't know you had a family-" Otterpelt got cut off by claws digging into her neck, blood leaking from it.

"Otterpelt!" Thistlewhisper yelled and ran towards Shredflash.

"Stay out of it." Shredflash took his claws out of Otterpelt's neck and slashed them across Thistlewhisper's muzzle, which caused her to shriek and fall backward in pain.

Otterpelt fell onto the ground, blood spilling out of her. She slowly looked up to see Shredflash looming over her. "Wh-Why are you doing this?"

Shredflash gave her an ominous look before gaining a crazed smile. "For my family." he said before clawing deeply into her non-blind eye, tearing it out and then biting into her neck. Blood spilled from out of her mouth.

Thistlewhisper froze in horror as she watched Shredflash kill her clanmate and mentor.

Shredflash sighed. "Such a shame." as he padded back down the Ocean Side.

Thistlewhisper ran up to the now-dead Otterpelt and cried silently.

*

Nova woke up and stretched herself out. She successfully got an apprentice! She stared at the sun as it slowly sank into the ocean. "I hope you're ready to start tomorrow, Marigoldpaw!" she meowed.

There was no response from her at all.

"Marigoldpaw?" Nova turned around to see Marigoldpaw in shock at what she was seeing.

Once Nova turned, her eyes widened.

"Otterpelt!"

Chapter 11

Dampbreeze couldn't believe what he was hearing. *Mistpaw is my apprentice?!* He thought and would head on over to Shellstar's den, but before he could, a certain apprentice ran up to him: It was Mistpaw. "Hi, Dampbreeze!" he mewed. "So when are we starting our training?" he asked with a wide smile on his face. "I'm ready to start now!"

Mistpaw's face and that wide smile reminded Dampbreeze so much of Blizzardfluff, he couldn't take it. *I-I have to go eat some goatweed...* The Driftclan warrior thought as he looked at his son. Dampbreeze stared at Mistpaw. His smile reminded him of Blizzardfluff. He shook his head quickly. "Uh, we won't be starting today, we'll start tomorrow!" he meowed back and quickly headed back to the Warriors' den.

Mistpaw gave a confused look as his mentor turned around and left.

Dampbreeze on the other paw. Once he headed into the warriors' den, he saw his brother Eagleswoop sleeping. *Good thing he is sleeping...* He thought and went to his nest to get the goatweed was behind it. Dampbreeze lapped some of it up quickly and then felt a wave of warm hit him in the muzzle, like how a wave would hit the shore on the Ocean Side.

"I feel so much better..." He meowed out loud.

"Oh, hey Dampbreeze!" It was the voice of Eagleswoop next to him. He had woken him up from his slumber.

You have got to be kidding me... Well, at least I can deal with him now; the goatweed helps a lot.

"Hello, Eagleswoop." he replied with a smile.

"Is the goatweed helping you?" he meowed.

"Yeah, it is. I've been feeling so much better recently!" Dampbreeze meowed back.

It doesn't make me completely forget about Blizzardfluff, but it eases my grief...

"That's great!" Eagleswoop replied happily.

Dampbreeze quickly headed to the entrance of the den. "W-Well I will go see Shellstar now so see you around!"

"Okay!" Eagleswoop yawned and laid his head back onto his paws.

Once the tom left the warriors' den, he made his way to Shellstar's den. He saw Mistpaw heading into the apprentices' den and sighed. Dampbreeze didn't want to train him, it was too much for his heart. He made it into the leaders' den and saw as Shellstar lifted his head. "Oh, hello Dampbreeze."

"Why did you give me an apprentice and out of the three apprentices, you gave me Mistpaw?"

Shellstar gave a surprised look and then sighed. "Dampbreeze, I gave you an apprentice because I need you to get your mind on other things. And what's wrong with Mistpaw? Isn't he part of your kin?"

Those words hit Dampbreeze like the goatweed he ate. "No, he's not. I'm just not sure he'll get along with me."

"Huh? Strange, I thought Blizzardfluff was your mate and..." Shellstar trailed off.

"No, she wasn't my mate..." Dampbreeze lied. *We are still mates forever, Blizzardfluff don't worry... I'm hiding this, for Mistpaw's sake...*

"Oh, maybe Otterpelt made a mistake, I guess," the Driftclan leader replied. "That won't make me change my mind about having Mistpaw as your apprentice Dampbreeze," he added.

"Shellstar you don't understand me-"

"I understand you very well at the moment Dampbreeze, so please, just train Mistpaw and when he's a warrior, you won't have to worry about him anymore."

I have to worry about him as a warrior, because that's when I will have to tell him the truth!

"F-Fine..." The warrior meowed and looked away.

"Thank you. Is there anything else you have to tell me?"

Dampbreeze shook his head and then left Shellstar's den. "I need to get more goatweed... Thistlebreeze told me she and Otterpelt were going to the Ocean Side today... So I'll just take some, I'm sure she wouldn't mind." he meowed to himself as he padded into the medicine den. Dampbreeze prodded through all the herbs there were until he saw a bundle of small branches huddled up with each other. *There it is.* Dampbreeze thought as he took some in his maw.

"Dampbreeze?" it was a mew from the entrance of the den that nearly made him jump. He slowly turned around to see the face of the Driftclan deputy, Featherdrip. She looked worried.

"Oh, hello Featherdrip," He meowed through the goatweed.

"Shellstar requested I check on you, but what are you doing in the medicine den? I hope you are not stealing herbs."

"Of course not!" Dampbreeze started. "Thistlewhisper said I could take some of these if I needed them. They help me calm down."

"Oh! Well, that's okay, as long as you're not doing anything wrong I guess... I'll check on you later, Dampbreeze."

"Okay." Dampbreeze replied as he watched Featherdrip leave the den.

Dampbreeze left as well and headed back to the warriors' den.

These will for sure help me through training, Mistpaw... He thought and sighed.

*

Mistpaw sat up in his nest in the apprentices' den excitedly. He just wanted to train now. He wanted to become a warrior as soon as possible. He looked on the right side of him and saw his sister Hollowpaw sleeping. He smiled widely and left the apprentices' den happily. He saw Dampbreeze heading to the warriors' den. He would go speak to him until he heard a yell from the entrance of the camp. Mistpaw looked over and saw what looked like Thistlewhisper, one of the two Driftclan medicine cats, dragging a limp Otterpelt by the scruff. Mistpaw seemed confused. *Did Otterpelt pass out?* He thought.

"Shredflash killed Otterpelt!" Thistlewhisper yelled.

Chapter 12

"Fang! Eclipse!" Shredflash yelled as he saw both his mate and daughter leaving him behind. They didn't respond or even turn around as they continued padding down a black path away from Shredflash and the small cave. Shredflash ran after them, but an unfamiliar tom stopped him. He couldn't completely make out the looks of the tom, but he knew the tom wasn't from Vertexclan, so that left Shredflash in utter confusion. "Who are you?" he asked. The tom gave no response and almost instantly dug his claws into Shredflash's neck. Shredflash's eyes widened as he realized what happened to him. He felt the tom dig his claws in deeper and deeper as blood spilled from his neck and maw slowly. The tom took his claws out and blood sprayed from Shredflash's neck. He saw as both Eclipse and Fang turned around and watched him fall onto his side. "He-Help me..." he could barely get his words out. The tom that caused Shredflash to fall on his side padded on over to Fang and Eclipse as they padded away from him. "Everything I've done... It was for the both of you...!" his mew was hoarse now. He watched as the three cats continued, but the tom stopped for a second and slowly turned around. Shredflash looked into his eyes as he saw them glow an orangish-red color.

Shredflash jolted awake. He hasn't had a dream like that in a while.

Therefore, I hate sleeping... He thought and yawned. He quickly noticed that Eclipse and Fang were not around him. "No..." he whispered. Shredflash got up and ran out of the small cave and looked to the left, then looked to the right. There were no signs of his mate and kit anywhere.

"Shredflash!" he heard a meow come from his right and he shot his head there to see Fang running up to him with a smile and Eclipse not far behind. The grey tom breathed a sigh of relief as his daughter came up to him and nuzzled into him. "Where were you two at?" he asked.

"We were just at the Ocean Side for a little while." it was the meow

of Eclipse as she padded up to both of them.

"Oh, alright, but please tell me first next time!" Shredflash sighed.

Eclipse giggled. "We didn't want to disturb your sleep. You looked so peaceful..." she meowed.

Shredflash only sighed once more, then looked at Fang, who was just smiling up at him, and then he smiled back. "You ready to start our training today?" he said.

Fang's eyes widened. "Yes!" she exclaimed.

"Good, go into the cave and eat something real quick and we'll start."

Fang did as she was told and ran into the small cave. Eclipse then licked Shredflash's cheek. "Don't do nothing too dangerous now." she meowed.

"I'll only be teaching her how to hunt today, that's all."

"Alright." Eclipse turned around to go back into the small cave, but then she looked back at Shredflash. "Did you harm another cat, Shredflash?"

"I'm guessing you saw the bloodstains on the sand?"

She nodded.

"It was only for protecting you two." he got closer to Eclipse and rubbed his muzzle against hers.

"Just please be careful, and don't get Fang involved with any of it..." she meowed.

"I won't." he meowed back.

*

"So what are we starting with?" Fang started. "I hope we can start fighting soon!" she said excitedly.

Not yet... Thankfully... Shredflash thought.

"Well, my lovely daughter, we'll begin by hunting."

"It's not fighting, but I'm still ready anyway!" she meowed back.

Shredflash and Fang were away from the cave. They stood in the middle of some trees and bushes. The scent of prey flooded Shredflash's nose. "Alright," he started, "First you must get a pleasant scent on where your prey will come from." he meowed and sniffed the air. He could scent a mouse nearby, and Fang watched as her father crouched down slowly and lifted his tail. Fang sat there silently, watching as a mouse slowly came across Shredflash's line of sight. It seemed like only a heartbeat went by as he stepped on the mouse's tail and clawed its back.

"Woah!" was all Fang meowed.

"It's not too hard, just need to wait for the right time to strike. Stepping on the tail makes it easier for them to catch. Well, only for mice anyway. They are usually around here." he meowed.

Seems easy! She thought and smiled.

"Here, you try now. There should be a couple of mice around." Shredflash said.

Shredflash picked up the mouse in his jaws and stepped back a little as Fang padded up to the spot he was in.

"Sniff out the scent first." he meowed.

Fang nodded and sniffed the air. She could smell a little of mouse coming from her right behind one tree. *Got its scent! Now I just wait...* She thought and crouched down, then lifted her tail. Fang waited patiently as she then could see the little whiskers of the mouse come from behind the tree.

Come on...

The mouse's head appeared.

You dumb mouse come on!

The mouse revealed itself and came right in front of Fang. She waited till the tail was in front of her, and then she stepped over and pressed hard on it with her paw. The mouse tried to escape, but Fang unsheathed her claws and clawed deeply into its back. "Got it!" she meowed as the mouse went limp.

"Significant job!" Shredflash purred. "We'll keep going for a little while and then head back to the cave."

"Yay!" Fang exclaimed.

*

It was now moonhigh, and Fang was at the Ocean Side with Mistpaw once more.

"I didn't think I'd be able to catch it, but I did!" Fang exclaimed.

"That's so cool! I can't wait for Dampbreeze to teach me how to hunt!" Mistpaw replied.

"Dampbreeze?"

"Oh, he's my mentor. He'll be teaching me until I become a warrior!" Mistpaw smiled widely.

"Okay, well, I guess that makes Shredflash my mentor, as you call it!" Fang smiled back.

"Shredflash? I feel like I've heard that name before, but I can't put my paw on it..." Mistpaw thought for a second.

Fang had a curious look on her face.

"Oh...! That's right." Mistpaw's ears flattened a little. "A cat got killed in my clan... They couldn't find the cat that did it..." he had a slight frown on his face.

Fang felt hurt seeing Mistpaw sad, "It's alright Mistpaw." she got closer to him and put her tail on his shoulders, "Whoever that cat is,

I'm sure they are in a better place now," she meowed and nuzzled against him.

Mistpaw looked at her and smiled, "I hope you're right, Fang." he licked her cheek.

I hope I'm right too, Mistpaw... she thought.

Chapter 13

Marigoldpaw got excited and nervous. She was ready to start her training to become a medicine cat for the future, but it worried her she would mess things up. *I have to do my best so I don't disappoint Nova!* She thought and then sighed as she quickly lost some confidence. Marigoldpaw looked around the Apprentices' den and saw as both Lionpaw and Emberpaw were both sleeping. They were snoring loud, and it didn't seem to bother the sleeping Lightningpaw, and Rainpaw was with his mentor. *How can Lightningpaw sleep through such loud noises?* She thought, then gave another sigh. Marigoldpaw sat in the apprentices' den for a little while until she heard pawsteps enter: It was Nova. The medicine cat looked at her apprentice. "You ready to start?" she asked, then smiled.

Marigoldpaw nodded. "Yes, I am."

"Good, then let's head to the medicine den, and I'll tell you the medicine cat code." Nova said, then padded out of the den with Marigoldpaw following behind her.

As the two she-cats were heading to the medicine den, another apprentice was staring at Marigoldpaw, but Nova didn't notice it: It was Rainpaw. Once she looked back at him, he glanced down at his paws and blushed as he headed back towards the apprentices' den.

Why was Rainpaw staring at me like that? Marigoldpaw thought and then entered the medicine den with her mentor. After the two were inside, Nova sat down and put her tail over her paws, and Marigoldpaw sat in front of her. "Now, Marigoldpaw, there are 5 things you must remember for the medicine cat code." Nova started.

"As a medicine cat, you may not fall in love, or take a mate."

Marigoldpaw nodded. *Okay, I guess...* she thought. *But why?*

"Which brings us to our next one, A medicine cat may not have kits.

It would interfere with their duties as a medicine cat." Nova meowed.

Oh...

"Understand so far, Marigoldpaw?"

"Yes."

"Great! Now next, a medicine cat may only retire when their apprentice is ready to take their place." Nova's left ear twitched.

"Will you retire after I'm ready, Nova?" Marigoldpaw asked.

Nova flinched a little at the question. "I don't know for now, Marigoldpaw."

Marigoldpaw didn't respond to that.

"Well, a medicine cat only shares dreams with Starclan. Which brings us to our last part of the code. A medicine cat may only discuss dreams, prophecies, and all the other important stuff with their leader or other medicine cats. They shouldn't share information with other clan cats or cats outside the clans." she breathed.

"What's a prophecy?" Marigoldpaw tilted her head to the side.

Nova smiled. "Glad you asked! A prophecy is when an important message from Starclan goes to a cat. That prophecy could involve one cat, two, or maybe even both clans!" she meowed.

That's crazy! Marigoldpaw thought.

"But sometimes prophecies aren't always correct, so you have to be careful when you try to figure it out, Marigoldpaw." Nova said.

Marigoldpaw nodded in response. "Okay."

"Now that we've gotten through that, I'll tell you what some of these herbs do." Nova turned around to the herbs in separate piles. "Well, you remember the ones I told you about before, right?"

"Mhm," Marigoldpaw said and pointed her paw at a pile of violet-colored leaves. "That's borage. I-I forgot what it does. I'm sorry!" the apprentice panicked.

"It's okay, Marigoldpaw! You're still learning so don't worry, you will make mistakes here and there, but in due time you will know everything!" Nova put her tail on her apprentice's shoulder and smiled.

"O-Okay..." Marigoldpaw sighed as she watched Nova brought the borage closer to them.

"Borage can help queens produce milk, bring down fevers, and soothes bad bellies and tight chests," she meowed.

"That's a lot of uses..." the apprentice mewed quietly.

Nova nodded. "Yep! Make sure you get a scent of it too, so if you have to go out and look for it one day you can find it easier!"

Marigoldpaw sniffed the herb. It had a very zesty scent to it.

"You should be able to find it close to Driftclan territory, shouldn't be too far on it at all." the medicine cat added.

That was so much information. And that was just one herb! I don't know if I can do this... Marigoldpaw thought and sighed heavily.

Nova noticed the frown on her apprentice's face. "Hey, I know this seems like a lot, but that's okay! We'll get through this together, I promise." she purred.

Marigoldpaw looked up at Nova and then smiled.

Maybe I can do this! She thought.

*

"Okay, Rainpaw, marvellous job catching that bird! I didn't think you'd catch on so quickly to the hunting strategy! We'll pick up tomorrow." Crownight meowed to her apprentice, which he only nodded in response. She then smiled and padded off to the fresh-kill

pile.

Rainpaw was a silent cat. He spoke little. He shakes his head either yes or no to cats and that's it. He doesn't show much expression either, most of the time he just has a blank expression on his face. Rainpaw headed back to the apprentices' den to get some rest until he saw a golden-furred she-cat pad out of the den.

He stopped in his tracks and stared at her: It was Marigoldpaw.

Rainpaw didn't understand what he was feeling at all. His fur felt like it was burning, like the sun was shining down on him greatly. His heart raced when she padded closer to him. She was padding with Nova. Rainpaw realized Marigoldpaw was staring at him, and he glanced down at his paws and blushed. As they went away, Rainpaw noticed his brother Lightningpaw coming out of the apprentices' den now. He came up to him, "Rainpaw?" he started, "Are you alright? I've never seen you act like this before!" Lightningpaw meowed.

Rainpaw quickly nodded and padded back to the den, but Lightningpaw stopped him. "You sure you're alright?"

Rainpaw nodded once more.

"Alright, I guess... I will go look for Stagwhisper now. See you around!" Lightningpaw padded off.

Rainpaw quickly headed into the apprentices' den. He knew himself that he's never acted like that, and he hated it. He laid himself in his nest and closed his eyes.

Maybe he just needed some sleep.

Chapter 14

Mistpaw woke up and yawned. He was ready to train for real today. He didn't start yesterday because of Dampbreeze not wanting to at all. *I'm sure he has a good reason to start today!* Mistpaw thought, then stretched his body out. "Watch where you put your paws!" it was the meow of his sister Hollowpaw who rolled over in her nest.

"Sorry, Hollowpaw!" He started. "Just ready to train with Dampbreeze!" he meowed excitedly.

"You can't be *that* excited, can you?" She replied.

"Yes!" His smile widened.

Hollowpaw replied with a grunt and rolled back over to go back to sleep.

After Mistpaw finished stretching, he got up and happily trotted out the Apprentices' den. He looked around the camp as he saw how lively it was. He was mostly looking for Dampbreeze, though. *I'll go check the Warriors' den then!* He thought and happily made his way over to the warriors' den, his tail swaying from side to side. He was in the middle of the clearing before his sister Ripplepaw, who seemed to have a slightly worried look on her face, stopped him.

"Hi, Ripplepaw!" He meowed.

"Hello, Mistpaw," she meowed back.

"What's wrong? Aren't you excited to train today?" he gave a wide smile.

"Yeah, I guess so, but something has been bothering me lately. And I think I should get it off my chest." she said.

"Sure, you can tell me anything, Ripplepaw! I can handle it!" Mistpaw puffed his chest out.

"Well, Rushstreak isn't-"

"Come on, Ripplepaw, we're going by the Ocean Side so I can teach you some fighting moves!" It was Lionsplash near the entrance, yelling for her apprentice.

"Coming!" she yelled back and then sighed, "I'll... Tell you later, if that's okay?"

Mistpaw nodded with a smile on his face. Then Ripplepaw ran off to go to her mentor. It only made Mistpaw wonder if they would fight with each other.

Better go find Dampbreeze!

Mistpaw continued his way to the warriors' den happily. Once he made it there, he peeked his head in the den to see his Sandcoat and Hailpad sleeping in their nests. He then looked around a little more until he saw Dampbreeze standing in his nest. He had his head lowered to the ground. *Is he eating something?* Mistpaw thought and padded inside and over to his mentor. He saw a glimpse of what Dampbreeze was consuming and before he could see it fully, Dampbreeze noticed a cat was behind him and quickly slid the rest of it under his nest and turned around to face Mistpaw.

"Hi, Dampbreeze!" Mistpaw meowed happily.

For a few heartbeats, Dampbreeze was silent as he stared at Mistpaw. *I wonder why he's staring at me like that?* Mistpaw thought, then spoke up. "Dampbreeze?" he mewed.

Dampbreeze shook his head. "Oh, sorry. I got lost in thought for a little there. Are you ready to train?"

Mistpaw nodded vigorously. "Yes! Aren't we practicing battle techniques?"

"Mhm, we'll be doing it by the Ocean Side."

"Yay! Will we be practicing with Ripplepaw and Lionsplash?" the apprentice asked.

"No, just the two of us for now." Dampbreeze barely got his mew out when he said it.

"Okay!"

"Let's share a piece of prey and then go." Dampbreeze padded out of the warriors' den with Mistpaw right behind him.

*

"Make sure you watch where your paws are going and where your opponents' paws are going," Lionsplash said as she lunged toward Ripplepaw who jumped back slightly, but her mentor still pawed her muzzle Ripplepaw was too busy staring at Dampbreeze and Mistpaw training in the distance.

"Ripplepaw?" Lionsplash waved her tail in her apprentices' face. "You there? You let me hit you again!"

Ripplepaw shook her head. "Sorry, I'm just thinking a little too much..."

Lionsplash looked back at the two cats were away from them and then looked back at her. "Are you worried about something? Or some cat?" she asked.

"Maybe..." Ripplepaw looked away and shifted in the sand.

"Come on, tell me what's up." her mentor sat down.

"Well, it's about Mistpaw. I'm worried that if I don't tell him something sooner, he'll get angry when he's a warrior..." Ripplepaw frowned.

"If you don't tell him what?" Lionsplash meowed.

"I don't know if I can say..."

"It can't be that bad-"

"Mistpaw doesn't know that Dampbreeze is his actual father and his actual mother is dead and Dampbreeze is planning on telling him

when he's a warrior!" Ripplepaw blurted out, but only loud enough so Lionsplash could hear her.

"Mistpaw doesn't know that?"

Ripplepaw shook her head, "No, Dampbreeze is keeping it secret so Mistpaw can be happier."

Lionsplash sighed, "Poor Dampbreeze. Ever since Blizzardfluff died, he's never been the same. He used to be so happy and now he seems sad, confused, and angry all the time," she meowed.

"Do you think I should tell Mistpaw?" the apprentice asked.

Lionsplash shook her head. "I think you should just keep it from him until you both are warriors. Mistpaw will be more understanding." she said.

"Okay, but are you sure Mistpaw will handle it?"

"I'm sure he will!" Lionsplash responded.

Ripplepaw looked up at her mentor and smiled.

"Now let's continue practicing and then we can head back to camp," Lionsplash meowed and smiled.

Ripplepaw nodded in response.

"Hey!" The two she-cats looked and saw Mistpaw running up to them.

"Oh, hello Mistpaw. Did Dampbreeze send you over here?" Lionsplash meowed.

He nodded, "He wants to know if we all can train with each other."

"Sure, but Ripplepaw and I have to go over a few things before we do that."

"Okay!" Mistpaw was about to leave, but he turned back around and padded up to his sister. "Didn't you have something to tell me,

Ripplepaw?" he asked.

"No, not at all."

"Alright!" Mistpaw smiled and ran back to Dampbreeze.

Ripplepaw gave a heavy sigh. She hoped Lionsplash was right about Mistpaw being able to handle the truth.

Chapter 15

Skystar has been thinking to himself for a while. Mostly about when, or even if, the clans will have another gathering. Skystar still wants both clans to be at peace because if there was a war between them, then Driftclan would have the advantage since Vertexclan doesn't have many warriors at the moment. *If there have been no Driftclan cats spotted around the territory, then it should be fine, right?* He thought and got up from his nest. Skystar then padded outside of his den and looked around the camp. He saw Buzzardgaze meowing to Smokedream and Emberpaw about something.

"Hey, Buzzardgaze! Can you come over here, please?" Skystar yelled across the camp.

Buzzardgaze's ears perked up as he heard his leader and he said something to Smokedream real quick before running over to Skystar. "What's up?" he asked.

"I've been thinking, how does another gathering between Vertexclan and Driftclan sound?" he meowed to his deputy.

Buzzardgaze gave a smile. "It sounds great! This will give both clans the chance to speak their minds and see if there are any problems." he meowed back.

Buzzardgaze is such a great cat. I love his enthusiasm! Skystar thought, then smiled back at him.

"Glad you think so! Could you gather some cats up for me? I'll be heading to Driftclan to discuss it with Shellstar," Skystar said.

"Sure thing!" Buzzardgaze turned around and ran off to find some cats that would go with Skystar.

I'm glad he's my deputy! Skystar thought happily as his tail swayed.

A few heartbeats later, Buzzardgaze came back with Lionpaw and

Rockcreek. "Where are we going again?" the apprentice meowed to his mentor.

Rockcreek sighed, "We're going with Skystar to Driftclan for a little."

"Aw! But they smell like stinky old fish!" Lionpaw whined.

Rockcreek sighed again. "Be respectful of them while we're over there, please!"

Skystar gave a brief chuckle. "Let's get going then, shall we? Buzzardgaze, keep watch of the clan while I'm gone, okay?"

"I will!"

Skystar, Rockcreek, and Lionpaw had then padded to the entrance and left Vertexclan camp and headed to Driftclan.

*

A little while later, Skystar could smell the heavy scent of Driftclan right in front of him as they got closer to their territory. Lionpaw would say something, but Rockcreek stopped the apprentice before he could. A blue-gray furred she-cat soon stopped the three Vertexclan cats. "Skystar?" she questioned. "What are you doing here?"

"Hello, Featherdrip, I wanted to talk to Shellstar if that's okay with him?"

"Sure, follow me to his den, then. The other two can stay near the entrance. I'll have a cat keep them company." she meowed. "Hey, Ripplepaw!" she yelled. "Stay by these two Vertexclan cats while I take Skystar to see Shellstar!"

A white-furred apprentice quickly ran up to them and then sat down. Then Featherdrip signaled with her tail for Skystar to follow her. They both went off to Shellstar's den.

*

Lionpaw looked at his mentor. He just stared in the distance. He

looked like he was spacing out.

He then looked at the apprentice that was now sitting in front of him: Ripplepaw.

"You're Ripplepaw, right?" he meowed.

"Yeah..." she meowed back.

"Well, my name is Lionpaw. Nice to meet you!"

"Nice to meet you too."

Lionpaw padded closer to her and sniffed her scent. "You don't smell like fish at all."

Ripplepaw giggled a bit. "Why would I? We don't live *in* the ocean, you know..."

"Good to know." he replied, smiling.

Ripplepaw blushed and licked her chest fur.

"You seem very nice. I would love to meet you again one day!" Lionpaw mewed.

Ripplepaw blushed more. "Oh really? If there's ever a gathering, you better be going!" she giggled.

Lionpaw giggled. "I sure will!"

I hope there is a gathering soon... Lionpaw thought.

*

Skystar was now in Shellstar's den, with Featherdrip waiting outside.

"So what did you want to talk about?" Shellstar meowed.

"It's about having another gathering. As we both know, a former Vertexclan member killed cats in both clans and ran away."

"You mean Shredflash? He killed another one of my clanmates a moon ago," the Driftclan leader said.

Skystar gasped, "I'm so sorry to hear that, I hope the next time Shredflash is around, we can stop him."

"Yeah, I hope so too. Anyway, what about this gathering that you speak of?"

"Cats in both of our clans are probably scared and we need to show them they don't have to be and we can still live peacefully." Skystar meowed.

Shellstar sat in his nest and thought for a moment. Skystar worried about the response that he would give, but then he finally spoke:

"Skystar, a moon from now, our clans will meet up again and have another gathering. We will speak more about Shredflash then. How does that sound?"

Skystar smiled, "That sounds great! Thank you for letting me speak with you." he meowed back.

Shellstar smiled back and nodded.

"I'll see you then." the Vertexclan leader meowed and padded out of Shellstar's den.

Featherdrip got up and then escorted Skystar back to the entrance. Skystar sighed relief. He was glad that Shellstar agreed to another gathering.

"Let's head back now," he meowed to Rockcreek and Lionpaw. The three then headed back to Vertexclan camp.

*

Fang was creeping behind bushes and trees silently. She was stalking another cat. She then sniffed the air and continued and then stopped right in her tracks. *He's got to be right in front of this bush!* She thought, then quickly jumped from behind the bush and pounced on a pile of leaves.

How is he not here-

Her thought got cut off by something pouncing on her, then pinning her.

"You must do a little better than that, Fang. Sometimes your enemy will know where you are about to strike from, make sure you keep your tail up too!" he meowed.

"Aw, but Shredflash! I thought I had you this time..." she pouted as her father got up off of her.

"You were close, but you need to be more silent and quick." he said.

Fang got up. "Alright..." she frowned.

Shredflash licked her cheek. "Don't worry, Fang, you're still learning. You'll get the hang of it soon!" he smiled.

Fang then smiled as she looked up at her father. "I hope so!"

I hope so... she thought.

Chapter 16

Thistlewhisper was sad, she's never truly been this sad before in her life. Shredflash killed her mentor, and now she also has to take care of her clan by herself. She was afraid that she would use the wrong herb or not even be able to figure out what was wrong with a cat. Thistlewhsiper laid herself down in her nest in the medicine den. *Come on... You can do this, right?* She thought to herself and teared up. Otterpelt still had the rest of her life to live, and another cat took it. Thistlewhsiper looked up to Otterpelt and saw her as a second mother. *Otterpelt was so caring and nice...* she thought, *Why couldn't it have been me instead*? Thistlewhisper put her head into her paws and sobbed silently to herself.

Starclan, why?

Just then she heard pawsteps enter the medicine den, "Hey Thistlewhisper, Is there anymore- Thistlewhisper! Are you okay?" she could recognize that mew anywhere. It was her brother, Dampbreeze.

She looked up at him with tears streaming down from her eyes. Dampbreeze then laid himself down by his sister and nuzzled her. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"It's just that everything feels different without Otterpelt here with me. I won't be able to do this by myself..." She sniffed.

Dampbreeze put his tail on her, "Thistlewhisper, I understand. When I lost Blizzardfluff, I couldn't bear her not being by my side at all, but soon I realized she is in a better place now among the stars, and so is Otterpelt. They are watching over us and they would want us to keep going for our clan. I know you can do it and Otterpelt knows that too," he meowed.

Thistlewhisper looked at Dampbreeze and then smiled, now with few tears falling from out of her eyes. "You're right, thank you, Dampbreeze." she meowed back and licked his cheek.

He got up and gave a smile. "Anytime. Now, is there any more goatweed? I'm a little low on it."

Thistlewhisper got up. "Yep! Let me get some for you." she went over to the neatly sorted herbs and picked up some goatweed for her brother, then turned around and set it in front of him. "There you go!" she mewed happily.

"I appreciate it." the tom meowed and headed out of the den.

"Mhm! Come back anytime!" Thistlewhisper meowed.

She was happy to know that Otterpelt was watching over her and would guide her paws.

*

Dampbreeze needed more goatweed. He wanted to be happier than ever. It took everything in him not to freak out over his sister Thistlewhisper crying. That made his hatred for Shredflash grow more. *First, he causes me pain, and then he causes my kin pain? The day I find him, I will end his life.* He thought as he padded back to the Warriors' den with the goatweed in his maw. Before he could enter Hailpad, his father stopped him.

"Dampbreeze! It's been a while since we've last spoken. You doing okay?" he meowed.

"Yeah, I'm fine," he mewed sternly through the herbs.

Hailpad then noticed how angry his son looked. "You seem upset about something. You sure you're fine?"

Dampbreeze didn't notice that he was crushing the herbs in his jaws until after Hailpad had said that. He then calmed himself.

"O-Oh... Yeah, I'm sure. I just need some rest." he meowed and quickly padded past Hailpad and into the warriors' den.

Once he got to his nest, he set the goatweed down and then sighed as he laid down.

"I *will* kill Shredflash, even if it's the last thing I do." he whispered to himself as he ate some goatweed he had in front of him.

Chapter 17

Marigoldpaw woke up in a strange and starry area that wasn't the medicine den back in Vertexclan. She was a little frightened because she wasn't in her clan at all. *It looks like the apprentices' den, but it's not... Where am I?* she thought and got up slowly.

"Come out here, Marigoldpaw, there's nothing to be worried about." the medicine cat apprentice could hear a meow come from outside of the starry den.

Who is that? And how do they know my name? Marigoldpaw was a little more worried now as she padded out of the den. Once she made it outside, all the plants and trees were full of stars. Marigoldpaw looked around in amazement. "Wow..." she mewed quietly. She then saw a cat standing in front of her and gasped. Marigoldpaw couldn't believe who she was seeing.

"Otterpelt?"

Otterpelt smiled and nodded at the apprentice. "You are correct," she meowed.

Marigoldpaw frowned as tears left her eyes, "I know I didn't know you all that well, but Nova and Thistlewhisper seemed very hurt when you were..." she trailed off as she couldn't finish her sentence.

"It is alright Marigoldpaw. I'm with Starclan now and I'm better than ever, so there's no need to worry!" she meowed back.

Marigoldpaw looked up and gave a small smile, but didn't respond.

"I brought you here to give you a message." Otterpelt said.

A message? She thought.

"Remember this, Marigoldpaw, follow your heart, and do what you think is right," Otterpelt meowed.

"What I think is right?" Marigoldpaw repeated, she saw, as Otterpelt faded away and the world around her went dark.

"Wait, don't leave, please! Tell me what that means!" she yelled as it got darker.

In a few heartbeats, everything was black.

*

Marigoldpaw woke up with a jolt and looked around. She was back in the medicine den with Nova sleeping next to her. The sun was shining into the den and the apprentice saw as Nova awakened. Once she did, she yawned and looked over at Marigoldpaw. "Morning! How did you sleep?"

"I slept okay..." she was frowning now.

"What's wrong?" Nova questioned.

"Well, Otterpelt visited me in my dream-"

Nova jumped up onto her paws. Her eyes widened. "Otterpelt visited you?" she padded closer to Marigoldpaw.

Marigoldpaw just looked up at Nova with a worried look on her face.

"S-Sorry..." she backed up a little. "Did you get a message from her?"

The golden-furred she-cat nodded. "Yes, she told me to follow my heart and do what I think is right... I don't understand what she means though..." She then sighed.

"Well, before we continue learning about other herbs, I'll tell you a bit of understanding dreams like that," Nova meowed.

Marigoldpaw sat up as she listened to her mentor.

"Now, when you get messages like that in your dreams. They usually mean something important will happen involving the clan, and you must think about what that message means until you find

out. Here, this message is for you and only you, Marigoldpaw. So you will have to find out what Otterpelt meant on your own. I will be there to help as much as I can, but this is something you will have to figure out yourself." Nova meowed.

Marigoldpaw only sat in silence. How was she going to find out on her own? She hasn't even been a medicine cat for that long!

"I know it seems like there is a lot on your shoulders now, but I assure you we will both get through this together!" Nova smiled and purred.

The apprentice smiled and purred. She was glad to have Nova as her mentor.

"Now, are you ready to learn about more herbs and how to use them?" Nova mewed.

Marigoldpaw nodded. "Yes." she paused for a little.

"I am."

Chapter 18

Trust yourself and trust what your heart says to do. Then you will find out how you want to live. The words of that Starclan she-cat echoed in Mistpaw's head as he tossed and turned a little in his nest. The Driftclan apprentice was dreaming about his encounter with that cat again. "Mistpaw..." he then heard a familiar voice while he was dreaming, but he couldn't tell who it was.

"Mistpaw?" the meow got louder. He was waking up now.

"Mistpaw!" that meow was right in his ear, which caused his eyes to shoot open.

"Who-" he stopped himself as he saw who was calling his name.

It was Hollowpaw; she had a worried look on her face as she backed away from his brother. "It's just me," she meowed.

"Oh!"

"Yeah, you seemed like you were having a bad dream, because you were moving around a lot in your sleep..." she said.

Mistpaw only smiled. "I wasn't at all. Thank you for waking me up, though. I didn't want to sleep for too long!" he mewed back to his sister.

Hollowpaw's worried look went to a friendly smile. "Yep! Aren't you and Dampbreeze going to hunt today?"

"Yep, and I can't wait!" the tom sat up in his nest and stretched.

Mistpaw loved training with Dampbreeze, although he was questionable. The day he became an apprentice, Dampbreeze didn't seem like he wanted to train at all. Mistpaw only figured that his mentor got tired and Mistpaw understood. Every cat gets tired, right? When they were practicing battle strategies, Dampbreeze was quiet for some time and gave little instruction. Mistpaw didn't

understand why he was barely telling him to do anything. Mistpaw thought mentors would be harsh on you when you don't do something right while training, but that wasn't the case with Dampbreeze. He would only shrug it off and say something like, "It's whatever," or "It'll be fine, let's just try again."

I guess he's just calm about things! Mistpaw thought as he exited the apprentices' den. He then saw Dampbreeze and Shellstar speaking with each other near the entrance of the camp. I wonder what they are talking about? Mistpaw made his way over to his leader and his mentor.

"Well, it's too late now, Dampbreeze, we already talked about this!" Mistpaw heard Shellstar meow.

"But Shellstar, I'm going insane-" He stopped when he saw Mistpaw padding up to them.

"Hello!" he meowed.

"Hello, Mistpaw." Shellstar smiled at him.

Dampbreeze only sighed.

"I'll be going then. Have fun training today, Mistpaw!" Shellstar quickly turned around and headed to his den.

"Thanks!" Mistpaw called out to him.

Dampbreeze seemed very irritated now. "Let's just go..." he meowed through his bared teeth.

"Okay!" Mistpaw replied and followed Dampbreeze out of Driftclan camp.

*

"No, No, No! You're doing it all wrong, Mistpaw! Keep your tail up, you mouse-brain!" Dampbreeze hissed at his apprentice.

"S-Sorry!" Mistpaw mewed and went back into the hunting position again.

Dampbreeze gave a heavy sigh. "Your tail is too low again, Mistpaw! At this rate, you'll never become a warrior..." he meowed.

Those words caused Mistpaw to stop what he was doing. He turned around as his eyes filled up with tears. Dampbreeze's expression then went from angry to sad at the realization of his own words. "Mistpaw, I didn't mean to say that-"

Mistpaw darted back to Driftclan with tears streaming down his face.

Does his mentor think he's not capable of becoming a warrior?

*

It was now moonhigh, and Mistpaw was sitting on the Ocean Side next to Fang once more. He was sobbing. "He said that I'll never become a warrior..." he was looking down at his paws.

"Hey, I'm sure he didn't mean it!" Fang put her tail on his shoulders.

He looked at her. "How do you know...?"

"Well, Shredflash is a little harsh on me too, but he only is because he cares about me and he knows I will do better," she meowed.

Mistpaw sniffled.

"He was probably just having a bad day. You never know, Mistpaw." Fang said.

"Yeah, I guess..." he meowed back.

"I'm sure he cares a lot about you, Mistpaw, just like how I care a lot about you!" She purred and touched noses with him.

Mistpaw gained a smile as he touched noses with Fang. "Thank you, Fang. I care a lot about you too!"

"Looks like you're feeling better already!" Fang mewed.

Mistpaw nodded. "Yeah! All thanks to you!"

"I'll help you anytime you need it, Mistpaw. How about I help you with hunting for a little while before we go back?"

Mistpaw's smile widened. "Yeah, that sounds great!"

Chapter 19

Skystar was anxious once again. The gathering was today, and he didn't know if he was ready for it. He was worrying about Driftclan not being at peace with Vertexclan again. *It'll all be okay. I just need to calm down. Shellstar didn't seem upset when we spoke last time, so it should be fine, right?* He thought and sighed as he sat outside his den, watching Buzzardgaze gather up cats for the gathering. Skystar forgot that today he also had to come up with an agreement with Shellstar on what to do about Shredflash, but the only thing he could think of was just killing him.

Wouldn't that be wrong, though?

Shredflash killed multiple cats, and one of them was Birdstar. He had one life left after he killed him. Skystar wished he did more to help his clan, but he didn't know what to do. Sometimes he felt helpless, he felt like he couldn't lead his clan sometimes, and sometimes, he felt like he was a bad lea-

"Hey, Skystar!" It was Buzzardgaze who padded up to Skystar with a smile on his face.

"Hello, Buzzardgaze." Skystar smiled back. "Have you gathered up every cat?" he asked.

He nodded. "Yep! They're gathering by the entrance as we speak."

"Thank you, Buzzardgaze. You'll make a magnificent leader for Vertexclan one day." Skystar complimented.

"Not as great as you, Skystar!" He purred.

Skystar blushed. "I appreciate the kindness." he meowed his heart picked up in speed and he didn't know why.

No, stop acting like this... He has Smokedream already and two toms being mates is way too crazy! Right...? he thought, then padded over

to the group of Vertexclan cats and stood in front of them.

"Cats of Vertexclan. I know things have been frightening and confusing for the past few moons, but during this gathering, we will prove to Driftclan that we can still live peacefully!"

Vertexclan rejoiced in happiness.

"Let us go then." Skystar turned around and started his way to the Ocean Side, along with his clan.

*

Mistpaw was lying in his nest in the apprentices' den with his head under his paws. He was still thinking about what his mentor had told him. Mistpaw didn't feel like moving at all. What was the point when his mentor didn't believe in him? The apprentice then heard pawsteps in front of him. He looked up to see the face of Dampbreeze; he looked sad now.

"Hey, Mistpaw..." He meowed.

Mistpaw only replied with a sniff.

"I'm sorry for saying that you wouldn't become a warrior. I was just tired yesterday, so it made me grumpy." he meowed.

"I-It's okay..."

"And you *will* become a warrior!" Dampbreeze smiled.

Mistpaw's mood then went from sad to happy in a heartbeat. He looked up at his mentor with a wide smile. "You mean it?"

"Of course!" Dampbreeze exclaimed.

"Hooray!"

"Now, there will be a gathering soon. Would you like to go?" he asked.

Mistpaw instantly jumped up at the mention of a gathering. "Yes,

yes, yes, yes!" he bounced around like a kit.

Dampbreeze smiled, "Come on, let's get with the rest of the clan," he padded out of the apprentices' den with Mistpaw happily following behind him.

As they joined the group of Driftclan cats, they could hear Shellstar meowing at them all.

"My fellow clanmates. Times have been strange the past few moons, but things will return to normal again after this gathering. And please try not to argue there... We're trying to find peace..."

Driftclan rejoiced in happiness as they left their camp.

*

Skystar and his clan were already at the Ocean Side, and he was on one side of the Flat Stone. Buzzardgaze was sitting next to him. "I'm worried..." he meowed to his deputy.

"Well, you don't have to worry, because Driftclan is here!" Buzzardgaze meowed and pointed his tail in the direction they were coming from.

Skystar saw as the other clan padded down the Ocean Side and over to the Flat Stone. Once they were over at the Flat Stone, Shellstar hopped up onto the other side of the stone, and Featherdrip sat next to him.

It was silent for a little before Skystar spoke up. "Before we announce our new apprentices... Let's talk about Shredflash..."

There were some gasps and murmurs from both clans.

"What do you propose we do, Skystar?" Shellstar asked the Vertexclan leader.

Skystar was quiet for a few heartbeats.

"Well?"

"Well, I suggest that if we see Shredflash at all, we kill him," Skystar meowed.

More murmurs had carried around the clans.

"He's the reason we question our peace in the clans, he's also killed cats from both Vertexclan *and* Driftclan. While I think there may be better options, this is what we should do. Who knows when he will kill another cat again?" he announced to both clans.

Shellstar gave a slight smile, then looked back at the two clans, "I agree with Skystar, we don't know when he'll kill another cat... So after this gathering, if there is any sight of Shredflash, kill him," the Driftclan leader yelled.

Some cats from both clans cheered, and some were quiet.

"Now, Shellstar, shall we get started?"

Shellstar nodded, "I shall start first. Prey has been running well in Driftclan and we have Mistpaw, Ripplepaw, and Hollowpaw as apprentices," he meowed.

"Mistpaw! Ripplepaw! Hollowpaw!" both clans cheered.

"Also, we have lost one of our medicine cats, Otterpelt, to Shredflash."

"May Otterpelt pad along with the stars now," Skystar meowed back to Shellstar.

There was a moment of silence for a few heartbeats before it was Skystar's turn to speak.

"Vertexclan's prey has also been running well and we have a few new apprentices ourselves. Lightningpaw, Rainpaw, Emberpaw, Lionpaw, and Marigoldpaw."

"Lightningpaw! Rainpaw! Emberpaw! Lionpaw! Marigoldpaw!" the clans cheered.

"Is that all from you?" Shellstar asked the Vertexclan leader.

Skystar nodded.

"Then you may all share tongues!" Shellstar yelled.

Both clans quickly merged.

*

Mistpaw looked at Dampbreeze. "I will go meet uh... Emberpaw!" he mewed.

"Sure thing, don't be rude now, Mistpaw." his mentor replied.

"I won't!" he smiled as he headed over to the Vertexclan apprentice.

She looked over at him as he came close and smiled.

"Hi!" he meowed.

"Hello!" she mewed back.

"You're Emberpaw, right?" he said to the grey she-cat.

"Yeah! What's your name?"

"I'm Mistpaw, future warrior of Driftclan!" he puffed his chest out.

Emberpaw giggled. "That sounds nice. Do you like being an apprentice?"

"Yeah! It's super fun learning everything about being a warrior!" he exclaimed.

Emberpaw gave a sympathetic smile, then sighed.

"What's wrong?"

"Well, my sister Marigoldpaw is with the other medicine cats and my brother Lionpaw went to go speak with that she-cat over there almost instantly after your leader stopped speaking..." she meowed and pointed her tail over to who Mistpaw could assume was Lionpaw.

Mistpaw recognized the she-cat Lionpaw was with. It was his sister, Ripplepaw.

"That's my sister Ripplepaw he's talking to!" he exclaimed.

"Really? Well, they seem to enjoy each other. Maybe a little too much..." Emberpaw mewed.

"They probably just are grand friends now!" Mistpaw gave a wide smile.

"I guess so..." Emberpaw meowed back.

*

"I'm so glad I got to see you again!" Lionpaw mewed to Ripplepaw.

"I am, too." Ripplepaw replied and smiled.

"I didn't think we could ever see each, but once I heard there was a gathering, I knew I had to go!" he smiled.

Ripplepaw blushed a little. Did he care about her that much?

He licked her cheek. "Ripplepaw, I'm glad I got to see you..."

Ripplepaw froze up as her pelt felt hot. She felt like she had a deep connection with Lionpaw now.

*

"How's your training going, Marigoldpaw?" Thistlewhisper asked.

"It's going great." she meowed and smiled.

"How are you doing yourself, Thistlewhisper? I know things might be harder now on you." Nova meowed.

"Oh, I'm doing great, no worries!" she smiled.

"Yay!" Nova purred.

Marigoldpaw looked into the crowd of cats and noticed one looking

at her. It was Rainpaw again. Once he noticed she was looking back, he glanced away. *Why does Rainpaw stare at me all the time?* She thought.

*

"Rainpaw... Rainpaw!" Lightningpaw waved his tail over his brothers' eyes, but he continued to stare.

"What are you even staring at?" he looked in the direction Rainpaw was staring he noticed he was looking at Marigoldpaw.

"Oh... Rainpaw, you know she's a medicine cat apprentice, right...?" Lightningpaw mewed.

Rainpaw only quickly looked at his paws when Marigoldpaw noticed he was staring. He chose not to listen to his brother at all.

"You have *got* to be kidding me..." Lightningpaw sighed and shook his head.

*

"And the group of snakes never came back!" Eelspeck puffed his chest out.

"Eelspeck, didn't you tell Stormfish and me about that being the scariest dream you've had?" Sandcoat meowed.

"Aw, come on Sandcoat!" Eelspeck complained.

Sandcoat sighed as Crownight, Smokedream, and Lionsplash giggled.

*

The sun was setting and Skystar turned to Shellstar, "Think it's time?"

Shellstar nodded.

"Cats of Vertexclan and Driftclan! The gathering is now over!"

Skystar yowled.

Cats from both clans said their goodbyes as they split up and headed back to their territories.

"So how was your first gathering, Mistpaw?" Dampbreeze asked his apprentice.

"It was great! I would love to go to another!" Mistpaw seemed happier than ever.

"I'm glad." he smiled as they continued their way back with their clan.

Mistpaw's eyes widened as he realized something that was said at the start of the gathering.

Both clans want Shredflash dead. I have to tell Fang!

Chapter 20

Mistpaw was sleeping peacefully in the apprentices' den until the sunlight shone on his face. "I don't want to wake up..." He whined as he rolled over in his nest.

"Well, you must wake up soon, Mistpaw." the tom glanced to his left to see his sister Ripplepaw cleaning her fur.

"Sleeping is pleasant, though!" he mewed back to her.

"Yeah, I want to sleep more!" Hollowpaw suddenly meowed out of nowhere.

"We have more training to do. We can't sleep!" Ripplepaw replied.

"Just wait until I'm an elder... I'll sleep forever!" Hollowpaw gave a cheeky smile to both her littermates.

Mistpaw and Ripplepaw both giggled.

Mistpaw then got up and stretched. He didn't feel like going out and training today, he just wanted to sleep, but he knew he couldn't because he did not want to let down Dampbreeze or his mother Rushstreak. He would pad over to the Warriors' den to see Dampbreeze, but he felt something paw his tail, so he turned around to see Ripplepaw and Hollowpaw next to each other.

"What's up?" Mistpaw asked.

"Well, Ripplepaw and I were wondering if you want to go see Tansytail in the Elders' den!" Hollowpaw meowed back and smiled.

We haven't been to the elders' den since we were kits! He thought and gave his sisters a wide smile. "Yeah! Let's go!"

The three apprentices left the den and headed over to the elders' den to see Tansytail. Before they entered, Mistpaw noticed Dampbreeze was staring at him. I guess he'll come and get me soon!

He thought as he went inside.

"It's you three again!" Tansytail exclaimed and purred. "I haven't seen you all since you were tiny kits and look at how much you have grown!" she said

Mistpaw gave a tiny blush. "Yep! We do a lot of training as apprentices, Tansytail!"

"Is that so? Well, what are you in here for? I don't have any ticks and I just ate a fish." she meowed.

"We just wanted to pay you a visit, Tansytail." Ripplepaw meowed back.

"Well, how about I tell you young cats a short story before you have to go back to your apprentice duties?"

"Yes, please!" the three mewed in unison.

"This story is the Legend of Floodclan."

Cool! Mistpaw thought.

"Long ago, before Driftclan and Vertexclan were around, there was a clan that went by the name of Floodclan. An exceptional leader named Gentle Lake led them."

"Did they live on Driftclan territory?" Hollowpaw asked.

Tansytail shook her head. "They lived right on the Ocean Side."

Right next to the ocean on all that sand? Wow!

"I wouldn't be able to sleep on the sand..." Ripplepaw said.

"Same here!" replied Mistpaw.

"But one day, the ocean got wild and violent. Floodclan did not understand what was going on. Until a huge tsunami rose above the clan and crashed down on them, killing them all and leaving no signs of them ever being there. Legend has it that Floodclan is still

alive and is just living in the ocean. The only way to reach Floodclan is if the mist falls and it parts the sea.."

The three apprentices stared in shock at what the elder had just told them.

"Mistpaw, I know you're in here." Mistpaw turned to see the face of his mentor, Dampbreeze.

"Hi, Dampbreeze!" he smiled.

"Come on, I'm teaching you how to swim." He meowed.

"Yay! Bye Ripplepaw, bye Hollowpaw! Thanks for the story, Tansytail!"

"Anytime." the elder smiled as she watched Mistpaw and Dampbreeze leave the elders' den.

*

"Come on, Mistpaw, you got this!" Dampbreeze yelled to his apprentice.

Mistpaw was swimming in circles in the ocean near the Ocean Side and his mentor was watching him.

The water is freezing! How can any cat swim in this? Or even catch fish? He thought as he was having a hard time pulling his paws forwards. He felt like he was sinking.

"Come back here, Mistpaw." meowed Dampbreeze.

Mistpaw struggled to swim back to shore, but he could still get back onto the warm sand. The apprentice was panting, "I... I'm sorry, Dampbreeze!"

His mentor only smiled. "Don't worry, Mistpaw, you will get the hang of it soon! You just need to keep your forepaws going and you'll be fine." his mentor said.

"Really?" Mistpaw gave a wide smile to him.

Dampbreeze nodded. "Of course, now try to swim one more time in a circle, then I can show you how to fish."

"Yay!" Mistpaw bounced around happily.

Chapter 21

"You can't just fall in love with a cat from Driftclan Lionpaw! We're too young to think about mates, and it's against the warrior code!" It was Emberpaw yelling at her brother.

"Why is it against the code, though? Shouldn't cat be able to love whoever they want?" Lionpaw meowed back, getting angry.

"You must stay loyal to your clan, Lionpaw! You never know what could happen with a mate that's in a different clan!" she yelled.

"Leave me alone, Emberpaw!" he then shouted back.

Emberpaw got quiet, and she gained a hurt look on her face. Her ears lowered in sadness as she slowly padded out of the Apprentices' den.

Emberpaw doesn't understand what I feel at all... When I'm a warrior, Ripplepaw and I will be mates and have kits! I'll keep it a secret from the clan as well! Lionpaw thought and pouted. The apprentice then heard pawsteps coming into the den. He looked up to see his mentor, Rockcreek, standing in front of him.

"Come on, Lionpaw, we will go hunt." he meowed.

"Yes!" the apprentice hopped up onto his paws and followed his mentor out of the apprentices' den.

Lionpaw knew he would make Ripplepaw his mate one day.

*

Rainpaw has been staring at the medicine den all day. His brother Lightningpaw came up in front of him. "Hey!" he waved his tail in front of his brother's face.

Rainpaw shook his head and stared at his brother in confusion.

"You've been staring at the medicine den forever! Don't tell me you've been thinking about Marigoldpaw, have you?" Lightningpaw meowed.

Rainpaw looked away with a blush.

"Rainpaw! You can't be mates with her... She's a medicine cat!"

Rainpaw only sighed and went back to staring at the medicine den.

"Rainpaw, I'm only telling you this because I care about you. I don't want you to get in trouble at all. If you were to get exiled or something from Vertexclan, it would upset Cloudthorn! And I would be too!" Lightningpaw told his brother.

Rainpaw heard him but didn't respond.

"You know what? If you know you'll be happy being mates with Marigoldpaw, if you become mates with her, then I'll be happy." Lightningpaw meowed.

Rainpaw looked back at his brother and gave a smile.

"Lightningpaw! Come here, we will go hunt!" it was Stagwhisper who yelled for his apprentice.

"Alright!" he yelled back, then he looked back at Rainpaw, "Promise me one thing Rainpaw, please don't get in trouble..." he mewed.

Rainpaw gave a small smile and nodded at Lightningpaw.

Lightningpaw smiled back, then ran over to Stagwhisper.

Rainpaw's smile turned into a frown because he did not know if Marigoldpaw liked him back.

Chapter 22

The sun was shining down into the Driftclan apprentices' den. A tawny and grey spotted tabby tom named Mistpaw was already awake and was ready to train more today. "Or maybe Dampbreeze will let us take a break today!" he said to himself.

"Who are you talking to, Mistpaw?" he looked to his left to see Hollowpaw giving an enormous yawn and stretching her body out.

"No one, just myself!" he mewed back to her. "I didn't think you'd be up so early! You usually sleep until your mentor comes and gets you!" Mistpaw giggled.

Hollowpaw smiled at her brother. "Yeah, well, I am now! Look who's still sleeping though!"

Both apprentices looked over to see their sister, Ripplepaw, still rolled onto her side. She was still sleeping peacefully.

She must have done a lot of training yesterday! Mistpaw thought, got up and stretched.

They heard pawsteps entering the apprentices' den. Both Mistpaw and Hollowpaw looked up to see the face of Dampbreeze. He looked exhausted.

"Hi, Dampbreeze!" Mistpaw gave his wide smile towards his mentor.

Dampbreeze yawned. "Hey, Mistpaw. We'll be going over everything you've learned today. Your warrior assessment is tomorrow." he meowed.

My warrior assessment is what?! The apprentice thought, now gaining a worried look on his face.

Dampbreeze noticed the worried look on Mistpaw's face. "There's no reason to be frightened, Mistpaw." the tom started. "I'm sure you'll do great! I remember when I had to take my warrior assessment... I

thought I would never pass, but it was easier than expected!" Dampbreeze meowed to his apprentice, then purred.

Mistpaw looked at Dampbreeze. "Really?" his orangish-red eyes shone.

"Of course!" the golden tabby tom smiled.

"Dampbreeze! Did you get Hollowpaw and Mistpaw yet? I'm ready to go!" there was a yell from outside the apprentices' den.

"That sounds like Gullstalk!" Hollowpaw mewed excitedly.

"Oh yeah, we will start by having you two practice fighting each other." Dampbreeze yawned.

Both Mistpaw and Hollowpaw looked at each other and then looked back at the tom in front of them. "Yes!" they meowed in unison.

Dampbreeze turned around and headed out of the den, "Let's get going then." he meowed and flicked his tail, signaling for the two apprentices to follow him, which they did. Ripplepaw was still sleeping in her nest.

Mistpaw, Dampbreeze, and Hollowpaw padded over to Gullstalk, who was waiting at the entrance to the camp.

"There you all are!" Gullstalk exclaimed.

"Hi, Gullstalk!" Hollowpaw mewed.

I haven't seen Gullstalk since Hollowpaw became an apprentice! Mistpaw thought.

"Heya." he meowed back to his apprentice.

"Are we ready to go to the Ocean Side then?" Gullstalk said.

Every cat in the group nodded.

"Great!" Gullstalk made his way out of Driftclan territory with his clanmates and headed to the Ocean Side.

*

"You got this, Mistpaw!" Dampbreeze yelled to his apprentice as he was batting at Hollowpaw.

Mistpaw and Hollowpaw had both been tackling and hitting each other with their paws for what seemed like a very long time. The two apprentices were about a few fox-lengths away from each other. Hollowpaw was panting, but Mistpaw was perfectly fine.

"Now let's see who will get pinned first!" Dampbreeze yowled to both of them.

"You sure Dampbreeze? Hollowpaw seems tired..." Gullstalk meowed worriedly.

"Ah, she's fine!" Mistpaw's mentor replied, "Go!"

Mistpaw began sprinting towards her sister, who sprinted towards him. As Mistpaw was coming close, he could hear Dampbreeze shout. "I believe in you, Mistpaw!"

He believes in me! He thought and sprinted faster towards Hollowpaw.

Once they were close enough, Mistpaw instantly tackled Hollowpaw and pinned her onto the sand. Mistpaw was now panting.

"M-Mistpaw, you're super good at this..." Hollowpaw's mew trailed off as she closed her eyes.

"Hollowpaw?!" Mistpaw gave a worried meow.

Gullstalk and Dampbreeze ran over to the apprentices as Mistpaw got off of her.

"Is she alright?" Mistpaw asked.

Gullstalk put a paw on Hollowpaw's chest. It was still gently rising and falling.

"She's exhausted..." he sighed. "I'll take her back to the camp."

"Do you need help to take her back?" Mistpaw meowed to Gullstalk.

Gullstalk smiled as he helped Hollowpaw up. "No, but thank you Mistpaw."

"We have to get you ready for your warrior assessment, still. I'm sure Hollowpaw will be alright." Dampbreeze added in.

"Okay!" the apprentice replied, but he still had a slightly worried look on his face.

Mistpaw watched as his sister slowly got up and headed back to Driftclan with Gullstalk at her own pace.

I hope she will be alright... He thought.

*

Mistpaw was now swimming around in circles, reaching his front paws out and pulling them back towards him, his back legs moving as quickly as they could.

"Almost there, Mistpaw, come on!" Dampbreeze shouted.

I can do this! I'll make every cat proud of me! He pushed on and swam around in one last circle before heading onto the shore.

"Marvellous job, Mistpaw!" His mentor purred.

Mistpaw shook his fur off and gave a wide smile. "Thank you Dampbreeze!"

"You're ready for your warrior assessment tomorrow!"

"What about hunting?" the apprentice mewed.

"We'll hunt a little while we're heading back, alright?" Dampbreeze replied.

Mistpaw hopped around like a little kit. "Yay! Okay!"

The two then headed back to Driftclan territory.

*

A little while later, Mistpaw was back in Driftclan camp in the medicine den. He was standing over a now sleeping Hollowpaw.

"Don't worry Mistpaw, she just needed some rest, that's all." it was the meow of the Driftclan medicine cat, Thistlewhisper.

"Okay!" he mewed back to her.

"It's good that you came to check on her though."

Mistpaw nodded. "Mhm!"

Thistlewhisper smiled. "Well, go get some rest yourself. You'll need all your strength for tomorrow! Your warrior assessment is then, right?" she asked.

"Yeah! I'm more ready than ever!"

"I sure hope so." Thistlewhisper meowed.

Mistpaw then left the medicine den and headed to the apprentices' den. Once he padded inside, he noticed Ripplepaw disappeared. *She probably went to go train with her mentor!* Mistpaw thought as he padded over to his nest and laid himself down in it.

Tomorrow, I will make my clan proud! He thought as he slowly closed his eyes and drifted off into sleep.

Chapter 23

"Fang!" the black she-cat heard a voice, but she could not identify it at all. Her vision was black, as if she was now blind and could never see again. "They are beautiful!" those words echoed in her mind as everything now went quiet. Fang then woke up with a jolt and glanced around. Eclipse was still sleeping next to her, and Shredflash wasn't there.

No surprise there... She thought and got up. Then she stretched out her body. Fang knew that her father still had a little more to teach her before she would be ready to go out into the world.

She hoped her father would let her, of course. Shredflash was always so protective of her and Eclipse, it annoyed Fang sometimes.

I get he's trying to protect us, but nothing will happen to me if I leave the cave for good! Fang thought to herself as she padded over to the prey pile and ate a small rabbit from it. She had caught it herself yesterday and was proud that she even caught the speedy little thing.

Rabbits may be fast, but I'm faster! Fang giggled at the thought.

"What're you laughing about over there?" Fang quickly turned around to see her mother Eclipse yawn and then smile.

"Oh, nothing... Just thinking about how great I am at catching prey!" Fang meowed back.

"You are now?" Eclipse chuckled.

"Yep! Shredflash taught me how to catch prey quickly."

"You know... When I first met Shredflash, he didn't know how to hunt at all." she sat up and cleaned her fur.

"Really?!" Fang exclaimed

Eclipse nodded. "He never got properly trained back when he lived in a clan, remember?"

"Oh, yeah..." Fang's ears lowered as she remembered how terribly Shredflash got treated when he was an apprentice.

"So, I taught him how to hunt, and he quickly learned before I had you. Your father is very skilled." Eclipse rubbed a paw over her ear.

"Wow..." Fang whispered. "Shredflash is so amazing!"

"Not as amazing as you two!" they could hear a familiar meow from the entrance of the small cave.

"Welcome back, Shredflash." Eclipse meowed and stood up, then padded over to her mate.

"Thank you, Eclipse." He said, then gently touched muzzles with her.

Fang smiled. *Maybe Mistpaw and I could be like that one day...* She thought and spaced out.

Would we even be able to? What would Shredflash think?

"Fang... Fang?" she could hear Shredflash's voice and she shook her head.

"Yes, Shredflash?"

"We need to continue your training. We need to practice fighting some more," he meowed.

Fang nodded. "Alright."

Shredflash turned around and padded out of the small cave. He flicked his tail, beckoning for his daughter to follow him before he was completely out of the cave.

"Have fun!" Eclipse meowed to them both of them as she watched Fang pad out.

I'll try... Fang thought.

*

His scent is close... The black she-cat thought to herself as she slowly crept down the forest path. She kept herself as quiet as possible, lifting her tail and listening for anything nearby. Fang stopped once she heard a bush close to her rustle slightly. *A little closer...* She slowly got closer to the bush.

Suddenly, Fang saw a black tom hop out of the bush next to her. She quickly took a few pawsteps back and saw him land in front of her: It was Shredflash.

Shredflash gave a small *Hmph* before he charged at his daughter. He reached out his paws to tackle her as he jumped again, but she quickly dodged. He nearly touched her shoulder. *Not this time!* Fang thought to herself as she came close enough to swat him on the muzzle with her paws. Shredflash pulled back one of his paws and swiped it at her, nearly hitting her on the muzzle. *Now's my chance!* Fang pounced onto her father as he was pulling his paw back. She then pinned him to the ground.

"So..." she breathed. "How was that...?"

"Fang." Shredflash started with a serious mew.

Did I do bad...?

Shredflash then smiled at her. "You did great!" he exclaimed.

"Really?" she got off from on top of her father.

"Yeah." he got up as well and shook his fur.

Fang only gave Shredflash a pleasant smile.

"Fang, you've improved a lot over these few moons, and I am proud of you." Shredflash nuzzled his kit and purred.

"I'm so glad!" She purred. She was happy that her father was proud of her.

"Let's head back to the cave. We will go over what you've learned soon." He meowed and padded back to the small cave.

"Alright!" she meowed back and followed Shredflash.

*

Somewhere in the forest between Vertexclan and Driftclan were two apprentices: Lionpaw and Ripplepaw. Something had told them both to go to that location and see each other. Ripplepaw laid her muzzle onto Lionpaw's shoulder. "I'm so happy to see you!" she mewed happily.

"Me too," Lionpaw mewed back, purring.

Ripplepaw lifted her muzzle and stared at him. "Did something tell you to come here too?"

Lionpaw nodded. "Yeah! It was like a weird dream or something..."

"It was the same for me!"

Lionpaw smiled, but he then gained a serious look on his face.

"What's the matter, Lionpaw?" Ripplepaw gave a worried meow.

"I want you to be my mate when we're warriors, Ripplepaw."

Ripplepaw's eyes widened. She didn't know what to say. The words that had come out of the Vertexclan apprentices' maw shocked her.

"What about the warrior code?" she finally got something out.

"Forget the warrior code!" Lionpaw looked away, nearly hissing at the thought of him not being mates with Ripplepaw.

"I love you!" he blurted out.

Ripplepaw was now more shocked than ever. Did Lionpaw just say he loved her?

"S-Sorry..." the Vertexclan apprentice looked away, blushing.

Ripplepaw then smiled and licked his cheek. He looked up at her in confusion.

"It's okay, Lionpaw!" she smiled and blushed, "I love you too and I would love to be mates with you when we are warriors!"

"Really?"

"Yes!"

Lionpaw happily nuzzled Ripplepaw. He now couldn't wait to become a warrior.

Chapter 24

Mistpaw jolted himself awake in his nest. He didn't care about the dream he just had; he was ready for his warrior assessment. On both the left and right sides of him, his sisters disappeared. *They are probably doing their warrior assessments already!* The apprentice thought as he quickly stretched and quickly headed out of the apprentices' den. Mistpaw knew he could pass his assessment. He just needed to focus as hard as he could. *No playing around today!* He thought as he made his way over to the Warriors' den. Mistpaw would see if Dampbreeze was awake and ready to start because, around this time, his mentor is usually awake.

He's always doing something in his nest in the mornings!

Mistpaw would pad into the warriors' den, but his mother greeted him, Rushstreak. She gave her son a slight smile.

"Hi, Rushstreak!" Mistpaw meowed happily.

"Hello, Mistpaw. Dampbreeze told me your warrior assessment is today! I want to wish you luck!" She meowed back and purred.

"Thanks! I'm super excited!" he bounced around like a kit, but then he stopped. He remembered why he came to the den. "Is Dampbreeze in there?"

Rushstreak shook her head. "No, he went to the medicine den to get something, I think..." she meowed.

"Okay!" the apprenticed turned around as he was going to the medicine den, but Rushstreak had pawed his tail, causing him to stop and turn around.

"Mistpaw, please listen to Dampbreeze." she sounded serious.

"I will! Why wouldn't I?" Mistpaw questioned.

"Just please, listen, and good luck with your assessment." she

meowed, and got closer to Mistpaw, nuzzling him now.

Mistpaw purred as he nuzzled back, "I will, I will! And don't worry Rushstreak, the assessment will be a breeze!" he puffed his chest out proudly.

Rushstreak smiled as she watched her kit pad off to the medicine den.

*

"Please... I need more of it, Thistlewhisper..."

"Dampbreeze, no. You've had enough for this moon, I think you need to lie off of the Goatweed for a while."

"Thistlewhisper, where is it?" Dampbreeze's eyes were bloodshot red.

"I'm not telling you! Get out!" she yelled.

Dampbreeze then unsheathed his claws. "Don't make me do this."

"You wouldn't hurt me over some herbs, would you?" Thistlewhisper had a hurt look on her face.

He sheathed his claws and closed his eyes, taking deep breaths now. "Y-You're right... What is wrong with me?"

The Driftclan medicine cat sighed relief. "Please, go get some rest Dampbreeze, you need-" the sudden claws that scratched the side of her muzzle cut her off. Thistlewhisper shrieked in pain as she fell over to the side, blood leaking from the side of her maw.

"I'm doing this for my sanity." Dampbreeze's mew sounded deep as he padded past his hurting sister and stood over the herbs.

"D-Dampbreeze, you don't need anymore!" she meowed and got up.

Dampbreeze instantly recognized the look of the Goatweed and lapped most of it up. His eyes widened as he felt the effects of taking so much of the herb. Dampbreeze turned around, facing

away from the medicine. His heart was racing.

"Dampbreeze?" Thistlewhisper got up. Blood was dripping from the side of her muzzle onto the ground.

The golden tabby tom breathed heavily. He stared at the entrance of the medicine den.

"Blizzardfluff?" he meowed quietly.

"What? Dampbreeze that's not Blizzardfluff, that's-"

"Shut up!" He padded over to the entrance to the fluffy white she-cat. His heart was beating faster and faster, as it was becoming harder and harder to breathe.

"Blizzardfluff..." he meowed again, now right in front of her.

"I'm sorry, Dampbreeze," her words echoed as she faded away in front of his eyes.

"Blizzardfluff!" He yelled as he felt his head hurt immensely, his heart was beating faster than a fish could swim.

"Dampbreeze...?"

Once Blizzardfluff disappeared, he saw a familiar apprentice standing where she was: Mistpaw.

"I-I..." was the only thing he got out as the tom's head pounded more, his heart going faster and tears falling down his face.

"Dampbreeze calm down!" Thistlewhisper shouted.

Dampbreeze fell onto the ground. His heart would never stop. He yelled and then coughed up blood.

He was dying.

"Dampbreeze!" Mistpaw came up to him and watched in horror as his mentor writhed on the ground, blood escaping from his maw, his eyes close to the back of his head.

"M-Mistpaw, get back!" Thistlewhisper yowled.

He quickly stepped back. He didn't understand what was happening. Thistlewhisper was now trying to do all she could to save her brother, but eventually, she just sat down and looked at her paws. She was crying now.

"Thistlewhisper?" Mistpaw mewed, "Will Dampbreeze be alright?" his mew was shaky.

"I don't know..." the medicine cat's meow was shaky.

"M-Mistpaw..." Dampbreeze's mew was hoarse. He spat out more blood.

"Yes?!"

"I'm your... I'm your f-" The tom took his last breath, as he didn't get to finish his sentence.

Thistlewhisper put an ear over his chest. She couldn't hear or feel his heart beating. It had completely stopped. The medicine cat looked away, with tears streaming from her eyes.

Dampbreeze was dead.

"Dampbreeze? Dampbreeze!" Mistpaw put his muzzle on his mentor's neck as he wailed.

"What happened here?" Mistpaw heard a meow and looked up to see Featherdrip. A few heartbeats later, Rushstreak had run into the medicine den. She gasped, then her eyes widened once she saw Mistpaw.

"Rushstreak..." he sniffled and got up, then padded over to his mother. He nuzzled himself into her chest, "He's gone..." he closed his eyes as he cried again.

Rushstreak stroked her tail along his back, "There, there, Mistpaw, it's alright... He's with Starclan now..." she meowed.

"I'll go tell Shellstar of this." Featherdrip meowed and quickly

headed out of the den.

Rushstreak closed her eyes as she continued to comfort her kit.

Chapter 25

Lionpaw had been awake all night. He was thinking about Ripplepaw and only Ripplepaw. He wanted to be mates with her. *Yeah, becoming a warrior will be cool and all, but all I can think about is Ripplepaw!* He thought to himself and sighed, rolling over in his nest in the Vertexclan apprentices' den. Across from him was his sister, Emberpaw. He was still mad at her because she didn't want him to be with Ripplepaw. *She doesn't understand what love is... She doesn't understand me!* Lionpaw sighed once more. He wished his sister would understand what he was feeling. *Why couldn't she fall in love with that other Driftclan apprentice?* Lionpaw watched as Emberpaw started to sir up. Then he looked over to see Lightningpaw yawn. The other apprentice was already awake. *Maybe she likes Lightningpaw or something...* He thought and got up. "I don't even feel like training today." he meowed out loud.

"What, why?" It was Lightningpaw who responded to the cream-furred tom.

"I've been training all this moon!" Lionpaw exclaimed.

"Didn't we take our warrior assessments yesterday...?"

"Yeah, we did! Wait..." Lionpaw thought to himself for a second.

Lightningpaw sighed.

"Cats of Vertexclan!", there was a yowl that came from outside the den. "Please gather around the Sharp Stone for a clan meeting!" it sounded like Skystar who was yelling.

Lionpaw watched as Emberpaw quickly got up and left the apprentices' den, along with Rainpaw. Lightningpaw would leave next, but he turned around and looked at Lionpaw. "You coming? I'm sure we will be warriors here soon." he meowed.

Lionpaw spaced out for a moment, but then shook his head once he

came back to reality. "Yeah!" he meowed back, following Lightningpaw out of the apprentices' den. Both apprentices headed over to the Sharp Stone, along with the rest of their clanmates. As they padded into the group of cats, they could hear Skystar's meow more clearly.

"I shall appoint four new warriors!" he yelled, "Lightningpaw and Rainpaw, please step forward."

Both littermates did as they were told and stepped forward towards the Sharp Stone.

"Lightningpaw and Rainpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your lives?" Skystar asked.

"I do," Lightningpaw meowed and Rainpaw nodded.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you both your warrior names. Lightningpaw and Rainpaw, from this moment you both will be known as Lightningblaze and Rainpad. Starclan honors your honesty and independence, and we welcome you as full warriors of Vertexclan."

Lightningblaze gave a smile, and Rainpad had given a small one.

"Emberpaw and Lionpaw, please step forward."

The two did as they were told and stepped forward next to Rainpad and Lightningblaze.

"Emberpaw and Lionpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your lives?" the leader asked again.

"I do!" Lionpaw meowed.

"I do." Emberpaw meowed with her brother.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you both your warrior names. Emberpaw and Lionpaw, from this moment you both will be known as Emberfoot and Lionstrike. Starclan honors your initiative

and loyalty, and we welcome you as full warriors of Vertexclan." Skystar meowed.

"Lightningblaze! Rainpad! Emberfoot! Lionstrike!" Vertexclan cheered for the new warriors.

Buzzardgaze padded in front of the four new warriors. "And as your first duty as warriors, you all will go on your first patrol around the territory!" he meowed and smiled.

"Cool!" Emberfoot meowed back.

"Neat!" Lightningblaze said.

Rainpad had a straight face and gave no reaction.

"Really?! Yay!" Lionstrike nearly bounced around in excitement, but he just ended up having his entire body vibrate.

"You all may go, then." Buzzardgaze said, flicking his tail.

The four Vertexclan warriors padded to the entranced of the camp and then headed out, following the steep path that was leading away from Vertexclan.

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After a little while, Lightningblaze spoke up, since no other cat was meowing. "This is fun, right?" he meowed.

Rainpad shrugged.

"Yeah, it's cool to see more of the territory! Kind of... What do you think, Lionstrike?" Emberfoot meowed to her brother, but there was no response.

"Lionstrike?" she said his name again, looking around this time.

Lionstrike was nowhere to be found.

"Hold on!" Emberfoot yelled and stopped.

"What's up?" Lightningblaze stopped as well and turned around to

look at the she-cat. Rainpad turned.

"Lionstrike disappeared!" she exclaimed.

*

"Aren't you excited, Marigoldpaw?"

"I guess..." Marigoldpaw meowed.

Nova was pacing back and forth in the medicine den in front of her apprentice. She was very excited.

"You will be a medicine cat!" Nova stopped and stared at Marigoldpaw with a wide smile.

"Yeah?"

Nova realized how close she was to the apprentice and moved back a little. "S-Sorry!" she meowed. "Just a little excited! You've come so far in your medicine cat training Marigoldpaw and I'm super proud of you!"

Marigoldpaw smiled. "Thank you, Nova! I'm glad you could mentor me through all of this. I've had a lot of fun and I'll be ready to be a medicine cat for Vertexclan," she meowed.

Nova sat there with wide eyes. She nearly shed a tear at her apprentices' words.

Marigoldpaw tilted her head to the side, confused with Nova's look. "Are you okay?" she asked.

"I'm just fine, Marigoldpaw, just fine."

"Okay!"

"Now let's go over some things before you become a full medicine cat tomorrow!" Nova meowed happily.

Chapter 26

"Aren't you excited for today, Ripplepaw?" It was the meow of Hollowpaw.

Ripplepaw nodded. "Yeah, being a warrior will be great! We'll get to hunt on our own and fight on our own... And even train apprentices of our own one day!"

"I can't wait!" Hollowpaw jumped around in her nest excitedly.

"How about you, Mistpaw?" Ripplepaw looked over at her brother to see him curled up and looking away from them.

"Oh, right..." Ripplepaw had remembered how Mistpaw saw his mentor and father die in front of him. Mistpaw took his warrior assessment with Featherdrip because of what happened to Dampbreeze. *Does that mean I must tell Mistpaw now...?* She thought and gave an enormous sigh. Ripplepaw looked back over at Mistpaw. He was still in the same position. *Maybe after he's a warrior, I'll tell him about Blizzardfluff... But what if he doesn't-*

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" It was Shellstar who yelled from outside of the apprentices' den.

Hollowpaw almost instantly hopped up and padded out of the den with a wide smile across her face. Ripplepaw got up as well she went over to Mistpaw and prodded him with her paw, "Come on Mistpaw," she started, "We're becoming warriors, aren't you excited to become one?" she meowed and gave a smile.

Mistpaw looked up at his sister. His usual smile wasn't there at all. He had a blank stare. There was no emotion in his gaze. "Sure." he mewed back and then shrugged.

Ripplepaw wanted to just curl up next to Mistpaw and comfort him until he got better. But she couldn't do that now. *I have to focus on*

just becoming a warrior today... Ripplepaw thought and prodded her brother once more. "Let's go."

Mistpaw sighed and got up, and once he did, he and Ripplepaw both left the apprentices' den and headed to the Tide Pool and stood on each side of Hollowpaw. The rest of Driftclan gathered around the three apprentices.

"I have gathered you all here today because there will be three new warriors." Shellstar meowed to his clan.

"Mistpaw, Ripplepaw, Hollowpaw, please step forward."

The apprentices did as they were told and stepped up to the Tide Pool.

The leader looked at Hollowpaw first. "Hollowpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" he asked.

"I do!" she meowed back.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Hollowpaw, from this moment you will be known as Hollowcreek. Starclan honors your spirit, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan," Shellstar said.

He then looked at Ripplepaw. "Ripplepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?"

"I do."

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Ripplepaw, from this moment you will be known as Ripplewave. Starclan honors your forethought, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan."

Ripplewave smiled. She was happy to become a warrior for her clan.

Finally, Shellstar's eyes gazed into Mistpaw's. Mistpaw stared at the

Driftclan leader. He could tell there was a small amount of hurt in Mistpaw's orange-red eyes.

"Mistpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?"

"I do," Mistpaw meowed.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Mistpaw, from this moment you will be known as Mistfall. Starclan honors your determination, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan."

"Hollowcreek! Ripplewave! Mistfall!" Driftclan cheered for their new warriors.

As the clan dispersed back into their normal duties, Ripplewave looked over at Mistfall. The tawny and grey tom was looking down at his paws.

I guess I'll tell him now... Ripplewave would pad up next to her brother so she could speak with him, but then a certain she-cat padded up to the three of them.

"Hey, Rushstreak!" Hollowcreek meowed as she turned around to face her mother.

"Hi, you three. I'm proud that you've all become warriors! It feels like you three were just born a moon ago!" she purred.

Ripplewave and Hollowcreek purred, but Mistfall was silent, still looking down at his paws.

Rushstreak looked at Mistfall, then frowned. "Mistfall, let's talk about something very important tomorrow, alright?"

"Okay." he mewed back, now looking up at his mother.

Ripplewave watched as Rushstreak padded off towards the warriors' den.

She'll be telling him herself then.

*

"So your name is Mistfall now? That's amazing!" Fang meowed.

Mistfall nodded. "I guess it is, but I'm still not feeling it..."

"Why?" Fang asked, then nuzzled against him. "What's wrong?"

"My mentor Dampbreeze died in front of my eyes. I miss him so much, why did he have to go?" Mistfall teared up, he missed Dampbreeze a lot.

"Mistfall..." Fang mewed quietly.

"Starclan, why couldn't it have been me instead?" the tom looked up with tears falling from his eyes.

"Mistfall, never say that again!" Fang yelled.

Mistfall then looked at Fang. He was a little confused.

"I'm sure wherever Dampbreeze is now, he'll be watching over you. He would want you to continue and live your life in your clan," she meowed.

"I guess you're right..." He sniffed.

"Plus, I want you to be my mate, Mistfall."

"H-Huh?" Mistfall's eyes widened in surprise at the words Fang had told him.

Fang nuzzled the Driftclan warrior once more. "I want to be with you, even if that means sneaking away from Shredflash and Eclipse every night. It'll be worth it."

"Fang..." Mistfall started.

"Yes?"

"I would love to be your mate!" Mistfall's frown turned into a wide smile.

"There's the Mistfall, I know!" Fang purred as she touched muzzled with him.

"I love you, Fang!" Mistfall meowed.

"I love you too, Mistfall." the black she-cat happily meowed back.

Chapter 27

Lionstrike was padding behind Emberfoot. He was enjoying this patrol. As he continued to make his way down the path with the group, something popped into his head. He could see what looked like a certain she-cat in his head.

I have to go see her again! Lionstrike thought, then looked around quickly. He snuck with no other cat noticing.

And he did.

Once they were off of the steep part of the path, Lionstrike silently padded away from the group. They were too busy speaking to each other about being warriors, so that removed any attention that Lionstrike had. *I hope she feels it too...* the Vertexclan warrior thought as he padded through many bushes so he could get to their meeting spot.

*

A while later, Lionstrike was back in the forest between Vertexclan and Driftclan. He was looking around, hoping that the she-cat would appear. *Maybe she's not coming...* Lionstrike thought as he continued looking until he looked to his left to see who he'd been looking for.

"Ripplepaw!" he yelled.

"It's Ripplewave now!" she yelled back, running up to Lionstrike and nuzzling him.

"Outstanding! I'm Lionstrike now!" he puffed out his chest as he nuzzled her back and then licked her cheek.

"Your name is pleasant!" Ripplewave purred.

"It's alright, yours is super cool though! I love it!" Lionstrike gave her another lick on the cheek and touched muzzles with her.

"Aw, thanks!" she meowed back, purring louder now.

"No problem! Now I can ask something since we're warriors now..." Lionstrike mewed.

"And what's that?"

"Ripplewave, will you be my mate?" the Vertexclan tom meowed with a serious look on his face.

Ripplewave stood there, shocked at what Lionstrike had asked her. She knew he would ask, but she didn't think he would ask her this soon!

"I've been waiting so long to become mates with you. Ever since I met you as an apprentice, I've wanted to be with you and even have kits with you." he meowed.

"Lionstrike..." she started.

"Yes?"

"I will be your mate!" she touched muzzles with him and purred even louder than she ever has in her life.

"Oh, Ripplewave. I'm so happy!" he purred, and they touched muzzles.

"I am too, Lionstrike!"

We'll be with each other forever, and I'll make sure of it! Lionstrike thought.

*

"Marigoldpaw!"

"Huh?"

Nova was pacing in front of her apprentice in the medicine den again with a wide smile across her face. "Are you ready to become a medicine cat?" she meowed, stopping to look at Marigoldpaw, the

wide smile still there.

The medicine cat apprentice nodded, giving Nova a worried look.

"Oops! Am I doing it again?" Nova backed up a little.

Marigoldpaw nodded.

"S-Sorry! Excited..." she meowed back to her apprentice.

"It's okay, Nova." Marigoldpaw said.

Nova smiled. "Alright! Let's get going to the Ocean Side then!"

"Are we getting Thistlewhisper?"

"Of course!"

Marigoldpaw and Nova both headed out of the Medicine den and padded over to the entrance of the camp. Before they could head out though, Marigoldpaw could hear pawsteps behind her. So she turned around to be greeted by the face of Rainpad. "Oh... Hello, Rainpad!" she meowed.

"Hi." he meowed back.

Marigoldpaw's eyes widened. *Did Rainpad just speak?!*

Nova turned around. "Who was that Marigoldpaw-" the Vertexclan medicine cat's eyes widened as well at who was in front of her.

"Can I speak to you when you come back?" his meow was deep and soothing.

Marigoldpaw blushed. "S-Sure!" she meowed back.

Rainpad smile and padded off towards the fresh-kill pile.

Marigoldpaw turned to face Nova, who was just as astonished as she was. Nova then shook her head, "Let's just go!"

The golden furred apprentice nodded and followed Nova out of Vertexclan camp.

*

After they went to Driftclan and got Thistlewhisper, they padded down to the Ocean Side, which wasn't far now.

"Are you excited to become a medicine cat, Marigoldpaw?" Thistlewhisper asked.

Marigoldpaw nodded. *I am, but I'm still shocked Rainpad spoke... And to me of all cats!* She thought, blushing at the sound of his meow in her head.

"We're here!" Nova said as she stopped in front of the Ocean Side, Marigoldpaw and Thistlewhisper padding up next to her.

"Are you ready, Marigoldpaw?" Nova asked her apprentice and smiled.

"Yes." she meowed back.

Nova nearly squealed with excitement. "Alright!" she started, looking up at the sky. "I, Nova, medicine cat of Vertexclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of a medicine cat, and with your help, she will serve her clan for many moons." she meowed.

She looked back at Marigoldpaw. "Marigoldpaw, do you promise to uphold the ways of the medicine cat, to stand apart from rivalry between Clan and Clan and to protect all cats equally, even at the cost of your life?" Nova asked.

"I do." Marigoldpaw meowed back.

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your true name of a medicine cat. Marigoldpaw, from this moment, you will be known as Marigoldfur. Starclan honors your bravery, and we welcome you as a full medicine cat of Vertexclan!" Nova meowed. This time she hopped around like a kit.

"Marigoldfur! Marigoldfur! Marigoldfur!" Nova and Thistlewhisper cheered.

Marigoldfur smiled. She was happy and proud to be a medicine cat.

"I've wanted to do that for so long!" Nova mewed.

"Congratulations, Marigoldfur! You'll be a great medicine cat for Vertexclan!" Thistlewhisper meowed to her.

"Thanks!" Marigoldfur meowed back and purred.

"Let's get back now before Skystar gets worried!" Nova meowed.

"Alright."

"Well, I'll be seeing you two soon, then! Hopefully!" Thistlewhisper padded back towards Driftclan.

"Goodbye, Thistlewhisper!" Nova yelled.

Marigoldfur still smiled, but her smile soon faded as she remembered what Rainpad had said to her.

"Come on, Marigoldfur!" Nova headed back to Vertexclan.

Marigoldfur quickly followed. She looked down at her paws for a little while.

What could Rainpad possibly want to talk about? She thought and pulled her head up, sighing.

"Something wrong?" Nova asked, then looked over at the new medicine cat.

Marigoldfur shook her head. "No, Nova." she meowed.

"Nothing at all."

Chapter 28

"Come with me!" Mistfall heard a voice that sounded familiar to his own. "We'll be safe here!" it meowed.

Mistfall jolted awake. He looked around to see that he was now in the Warriors' den. *Oh, right...* he thought, *I became a warrior yesterday!* He could see that some warriors disappeared. The only warriors were in the den were Stormfish and Eelspeck, both still asleep. *I won't get surprised if they retired to the Elders' den soon!* Mistfall thought and got up. His becoming mates with Fang has made him forget about Dampbreeze's death.

But he didn't forget.

He couldn't forget about Dampbreeze. *He was great, and he believed in me too!* Mistfall thought as he padded out of the warriors' den. The tom now had a frown on his face as he made his way over to the fresh-kill pile. He didn't know why he was going over there; he wasn't hungry, anyway. A few heartbeats later, he saw Rushstreak padding over to him. *I forgot...* Mistfall sighed as she padded up to him.

"Hey, Mistfall." she meowed.

"Hi!"

"Do you want to talk now, or later?" Rushstreak asked.

"Maybe la-"

"Mistfall! Rushstreak! Just the two I needed. Come over here!" it was Featherdrip that yelled near the entrance of the camp. Mistfall looked over to see her standing next to Ripplewave. *What could she possibly need...?*

Rushstreak and Mistfall padded over to the two she-cats near the entrance. Ripplewave nearly looked away once she saw Mistfall

gazing down on her.

"Hey, Featherdrip!" Rushstreak said. "What did you need us for?"

"I need you three to go see what you can catch in the ocean on the Ocean Side." she meowed.

"Sure!" the dark ginger she-cat meowed back.

"Sounds great!" Ripplewave mewed.

Mistfall just nodded.

"Leaf-bare may approach soon, and we need to make sure we have enough prey to get through it. So I'm having you three catch some fish to fill up the pile." Featherdrip meowed.

"You can count on us! Come on, you two." Rushstreak made her way out of the camp, Mistfall and Ripplewave padded behind their mother.

*

Mistfall, Rushstreak, and Ripplewave were all sitting by the Ocean Side. They've only caught about four fish and they were still running their paws through the chilly water.

"You know, Dampbreeze cared about you a lot, Mistfall." Rushstreak meowed, breaking the silence.

"So we're having this talk now?" Mistfall meowed back.

Rushstreak nodded.

"Mistfall, Dampbreeze is your actual father."

Mistfall's eyes widened as he slowly turned to look at Rushstreak. "What?"

"Dampbreeze was your actual father." Rushstreak meowed again.

"So Sandcoat isn't your mate?" Mistfall seemed confused now.

"He is. It's just that your actual mother died many moons ago. Her name was Blizzardfluff, and Shredflash killed her."

Shredflash did what?! Mistfall thought he was getting angry now.

"All those moons ago, Shredflash came to Driftclan and killed a cat by the name of Icejaw. Icejaw was Blizzardfluff's father. No cat knows why he did it. He just padded into the camp and attacked Icejaw. Before he did that, he killed two members of his clan, Vertexclan, before running away. One of those cats was one of the past leaders of Vertexclan, Birdstar, causing him to lose one of his lives." Rushstreak meowed.

"H-How do I know any of this is true...? Why should I believe that you're not my mother and Sandcoat isn't my father?" Mistfall's mew shook.

"It's true because I was there when Dampbreeze came into the Nursery talking about you when we were kits, Mistfall." Ripplewave meowed.

"You were listening?" Rushstreak turned her head to face Ripplewave.

Ripplewave nodded. "I remember you both agreeing to tell Mistfall that Dampbreeze was his actual father when he became a warrior."

Mistfall's eyes seemed to go dark. "Why didn't he just tell me my mother was dead sooner?"

"He didn't want you to feel hurt and alone, he wanted you to live a content life." Rushstreak replied, frowning now.

"I would have been just fine if he told me all of this sooner!" the tom smacked the water and hissed.

"Calm down, Mistfall!" Ripplewave yelled.

Mistfall padded up to Ripplewave, "Don't tell me to calm down when you aren't the one who's gotten lied to their entire life!" He growled.

"Mistfall..." Ripplewave's mew sounded hurt.

"I'm over this." Mistfall started padding away from Rushstreak and Ripplewave and headed back to Driftclan.

"Mistfall! Come back!" Rushstreak called to him.

He didn't look back as he headed back to camp.

*

Mistfall curled up into his nest inside the warriors' den. He didn't want to move at all, he just wanted to sleep forever at this point. The warriors' den was empty, and only he was in it.

"Mistfall!" he heard a mew that nearly made him jump.

"W-Who's there?!" he looked up and right in front of him to see a fluffy white she-cat look down on him.

"Just me, Blizzardfluff!" she meowed.

"Blizzardfluff? You're my mother?!"

"Yep!"

"You asked me how I wanted to live my life all those moons ago..." Mistfall meowed to her.

"Mhm!" her smile got wider. "Did you ever figure it out?"

"No... And I don't know if I ever will... My entire life just seems like a lie at this point..." Mistfall sighed.

"No, it's not! You still have your clan and your mate, of course!" Blizzardfluff still smiled.

Mistfall gasped. "Fang!" his frown went to a smile. How could he forget about his mate?

"So, Mistfall, have you figured out how you want to live your life yet?"

"Yes, I have!" he gave Blizzardfluff a wide smile.

"How do you want to live?" she gave the same wide smile back.

"I want to have kits with Fang and live with her in Driftclan and protect every cat! Especially my kin!" Mistfall meowed.

"Yay! I'm so proud of you for figuring it out!" Blizzardfluff hopped around.

"Mistfall?" the two cats heard a yell from outside the warriors' den.

"Well, looks like I'll be going now. It's nice seeing my kit all grown up and making his own decisions!" she meowed, fading away.

Mistfall held back tears as Blizzardfluff faded. "Goodbye, Blizzardfluff! Tell Dampbreeze I said Hello!"

Blizzardfluff giggled. "Sure thing! Remember that we'll always be watching over you, Mistfall!" her mew echoed as she completely disappeared.

"Mistfall, are you okay?" it was Ripplewave who entered the warriors' den with a worried look.

"I'm just fine!" the tawny grey tom mewed.

"So... Are you not mad at Rushstreak and me anymore?"

"I didn't like being lied to, but Dampbreeze did it to keep me happy and I'm fine with that now!" Mistfall smiled.

"You sure?" Ripplewave asked.

"Yep! Now let's go share a piece of prey! I'll race you to the fresh-kill pile!" Mistfall smirked and ran past his littermate.

"H-Hey! Wait up!" Rushstreak yelled and ran after him.

Chapter 29

"Fang, are you alright?"

"Yes, Eclipse, I'm fine." Fang meowed back.

"Are you sure? You've been acting grumpy and staring outside the cave all day..." Eclipse said with a worried look on her face.

Fang nodded. She didn't understand why she was acting like this. She felt sick, but she didn't tell Eclipse that. Fang didn't want to tell Eclipse that because she didn't want her to be worried and also tell Shredflash who would worry even more.

I'll just go sit by the Ocean Side for a while... she thought, then turned to look at her mother. "I'm going to the Ocean Side," she meowed.

"Don't stay down there for too long, you know how-"

"How Shredflash gets. Yeah, I know." she cut her mother off. "I'm not a kit anymore. Shredflash has taught me how to fight and fend for myself. Can I just do things now without him worrying about me?" she meowed, and then padded out of the small cave.

Eclipse sat there with wide eyes as she watched her daughter leave.

*

Rainpad was pacing around outside the warriors' den. He worried about a certain she-cat and he just wanted to know if she was alright. He noticed another warrior come out of the den, but he didn't mind them at all.

"Rainpad... Rainpad!" the meow caused him to stop pacing and look up at who was calling his name. It was Lightningblaze.

Lightningblaze stared at his brother in confusion. "What are you doing?" he mewed.

Rainpad shrugged and looked towards the entrance of the camp.

"You're waiting for Marigoldpaw, aren't you?" Lightningblaze's look went from confusion to a slight frown.

Rainpad looked back at him and nodded.

"Where did she go?"

"To become a medicine cat." Rainpad meowed.

"Heh, been a while since I've heard you meow something." Lightningblaze gave a smile now. "You must truly want her to be your mate."

"If we become mates, can you please keep it a secret, Lightningblaze?" the white-furred tom mewed to his twin brother.

"I will. As long as you're happy, Rainpad."

"Thank you." Rainpad purred.

"Look at who's at the entrance." Lightningblaze said.

Rainpad turned around to see the golden-furred she-cat. Once she noticed Rainpad staring at her, she looked down at her paws with a blush.

"Go talk to her," Lightningblaze meowed and nudged his brother.

Rainpad nodded and ran over to the she-cat.

A few heartbeats later, he padded up to both Nova and Marigoldfur. "Oh, hey Rainpad!" Nova meowed.

"Hi, can I speak with Marigoldpaw now?" he asked politely.

"Sure! And it's Marigoldfur now, she's a medicine cat!" Nova smiled but got surprised at the fact that Rainpad was speaking.

Rainpad just nodded.

"I'll leave you two be, then! Marigoldfur, I'll be in the medicine

den!" Nova mewed and padded off to the Vertexclan medicine den.

Rainpad watched and made sure that Nova wasn't watching the two.

"Marigoldfur," he started.

Marigoldfur looked up with a heavy blush into the tom's eyes. "Y-Yes?" she meowed back.

"Will you be my mate?"

Marigoldfur's eyes widened as she blushed more at Rainpad's question.

*

Why would he want to be my mate? Doesn't he know I'm a medicine cat and we can't have mates? What if I say no? What if I say yes? Questions were surging through Marigoldfur's mind as she stared at Rainpad.

"What about the medicine cat code...?" Marigoldfur mewed, looking around to make sure there were no other cats around them.

"We can keep it secret."

"W-What if Nova finds out and I have to stop being a medicine cat?"

"We'll just make sure she doesn't find out." Rainpad meowed.

Marigoldfur was quiet for a moment, staring at the white-furred tom. She didn't understand why this was happening at all.

"Rainpad, I don't know. I just became a medicine cat and I can't ruin that... This will be on my mind though, and when I have an answer, I'll tell you." Marigoldfur meowed.

Rainpad frowned, not giving a response.

"If you need anything, I'll be in the medicine den with Nova." Marigoldfur brushed past the tom as she started heading back to the

den.

"I need you." Rainpad meowed.

Marigoldfur stopped for a second. She heard Rainpad, but then she continued her way to the medicine den.

Chapter 30

Ripplewave was padding around Driftclan camp. She had nothing to do, and it felt like she was the only one awake. Which she wasn't, but it felt like she was. She noticed Hollowcreek padding over to her; she smiled as she padded up to her sister. "Hey, Hollowcreek." Ripplewave meowed.

"Hi, Ripplewave!" she meowed back. "How are things for you as a warrior?"

"It's fine! I hunted at the Ocean Side with Mistfall and Rushstreak yesterday."

"Aw! I wish I could've gone too!" Hollowcreek meowed and pouted.

"I'm sure you'll be able to hunt soon! Featherdrip told us that leaf-bare might come." Ripplewave licked her paw and rubbed it over her right ear.

"No wonder the wind has been feeling colder on my fur!" the brown- and golden-furred she-cat exclaimed.

Ripplewave nodded.

"Well, I will go see if Shellstar has any tasks for me to do!" Hollowcreek meowed and padded off to the leaders' den.

"Goodbye then!" Ripplewave called to her sister and smiled. She wondered if she even knows about everything that happened with Mistfall.

She'll find out, eventually! The white-furred she-cat thought as she headed near the entrance of the camp. She then halted. Ripplewave felt something she had felt before, and an image of Lionstrike had appeared in her head. I need to go see him. She thought and looked around, making sure there were no other cats around her before creeping out of Driftclan camp.

*

Back in the spot between Vertexclan and Driftclan lied two cats: Ripplewave and Lionstrike. Both meowing about different things.

"How many fish did you catch?" Lionstrike asked

"It was only like six or something..." Ripplewave meowed.

"Still great! I'm surprised you still smell good after all this time!" the tom smirked.

"Oh, hush!" Ripplewave licked his cheek, then purred.

Lionstrike chuckled.

"We need to be more careful, though. If got caught sneaking out of camp, then I wouldn't be able to go on without seeing you." Ripplewave meowed, frowning now.

"Has your clan suspected you yet?"

"No, but we should be careful." she meowed back and nuzzled him.

"Alright, but don't worry! They don't call me sneaky Lionstrike for nothing!" Lionstrike puffed his chest out.

"Are you even called that?"

"Nope!"

Ripplewave laughed, nuzzling him more and purring. "We should go now though," she then meowed.

"Aw, come on! The sun is still high up! I want to stay with you some more." Lionstrike pouted.

"We have to be careful, Lionstrike. I'll see you tomorrow, alright?" She touched muzzles with him.

"Fine..." he meowed back as they touched muzzles, Ripplewave, then turning around and heading back to her clan.

I'll see you then, Lionstrike.

*

Mistfall peeked his head out of the Warriors' den. He looked up to see the stars shining down on him, along with the moon nearly up as high as it could go. The tom slowly crept out of the den and padded towards the entrance. He would go see Fang again, but he would ask her an important question. *I hope it all goes well...* Mistfall thought as he quickly padded out of the territory and headed to the Ocean Side. As he made it onto the sand, he could see his mate staring off into the distance of the ocean. The moon floated above where the ocean ended. Fang turned around, her burgundy eyes gazing into Mistfall's. Mistfall padded over to her and sat beside her. "Hello." he meowed.

"Hi." she meowed back, laying her head on his shoulder.

"Fang, I have something to ask you..." Mistfall started.

"Ask away!" she purred.

"Will you live with me in Driftclan?"

Fang pulled her head up and looked into Mistfall's orange-red eyes. "Would your clan let me? Aren't they after Shredflash?"

Mistfall nodded. "Yeah, but we don't have to tell them he's your father! Plus, Shellstar wouldn't mind a new clan member!" he gave a wide smile.

Fang smiled. "I would love to!"

"Yay!"

"But." she added. "I must tell Eclipse and maybe Shredflash... Will you come to get me and take me to Driftclan tomorrow?" she mewed.

"I will for sure!" Mistfall meowed back. "But how will I find you?"

"Just go down to the end of the Ocean Side and go right. Once you

get into the forest, then you'll just need to keep heading forward. Eventually, you'll find a small cave, that's where I stay at!" she meowed.

"Okay! I'll remember, but I'll be heading back to my clan now, I'll talk to you soon, Fang!" Mistfall meowed back and padded back to Driftclan camp.

"I'll see you soon!" Fang smiled as she watched her mate head back to his clan.

Chapter 31

It's been a moon since Ripplewave has seen Lionstrike. She's felt uneasy and sick most of the time, so she headed over to the medicine den to see Thistlewhisper. *I hope it is nothing serious...* she thought as she padded into the den, Thistlewhisper now looking up from her nest with a smile. "Hello, Ripplewave!" she meowed, then stretched herself out before getting up.

"Hi." she mewed back, sighing.

"Something wrong? Are you hurting somewhere? Did you step on a sharp stone?" Thistlewhisper meowed, looking all around the white-furred she-cat's body to make sure she didn't have any injuries.

"It's just that I've been feeling uneasy and sick and I don't know why... I've been feeling heavy recently too..." she meowed and sighed.

"Hmm... Could you lay on your side for me?" Thistlewhisper asked.

"Sure thing!" Ripplewave replied, doing as the medicine cat said.

Thistlewhisper padded back to the front of the she-cat and put a paw on her belly and rubbed it slowly. Ripplewave couldn't help but give a purr as the Driftclan medicine cat rubbed her paw on her belly. She closed her eyes as she enjoyed the rubbing. A few heartbeats later, Thistlewhisper stopped and gave a smile. "Well, Ripplewave." she started.

"Hmm?" she opened her eyes. "Why'd you stop? I was just enjoying that!" Ripplewave exclaimed and smirked.

"Eventually you'll be expecting kits."

Ripplewave's eyes widened. *I'm what?!* she thought, nearly hopping up onto her paws. "I'll be what?" she repeated to Thistlewhisper.

"You'll be having kits!" Thistlewhisper meowed, now smiling.

Ripplewave gave a fake smile. "I'm so excited!" she lied.

"Who's the lucky one that you'll be having kits with?" the medicine cat said, her tail lashing.

Ripplewave got up. *I have to go tell Lionstrike...* the white she-cat thought, then padded towards the entrance. "Ripplewave!" she then turned around when Thistlewhisper called for her.

"Please be careful and come back more often please. Eventually, you will be in the Nursery." she meowed.

Ripplewave nodded, then quickly headed out of the den. She needed to get to Lionstrike as soon as possible. Ripplewave padded over to Shellstar's den. She peeked her head in. "Shellstar?" she meowed.

The light gray-furred tom lifted his head and looked at Ripplewave. "Yes?"

"I need to go to Vertexclan to see if a cat is okay."

"Huh? What happened to them?" Shellstar mewed.

"They nearly drowned in the ocean yesterday and I saved them. I just want to make sure they are okay," she lied to her leader.

"Well, you may go, but I might send another warrior with you."

"Why? Aren't both clans at peace with each other? I'll be careful, Shellstar." she meowed back, her ear twitching.

Shellstar stared at Ripplewave for a moment before heaving a sigh. "Alright, I trust you know what you're doing, Ripplewave, don't stay there too long. If you do, I will send another warrior to get you." he meowed and stretched himself out.

Ripplewave nodded. "I will." she said and then ran out of the leaders' den.

She saw Mistfall in front of her as she ran towards the entrance. "Hey, Ripplewave!" he meowed as he watched her zoom past him.

"Can't talk right now! I'll be back!" she called back to him as she left the camp.

*

A while later, Ripplewave padded up the steep path that leads to the entrance of Vertexclan camp. *How do they go up and down this all the time? It's so tiring!* She thought as she made it to the entrance, panting a little. The Driftclan she-cat waited for a little while before she saw a cat look over at her. It was a grey tom, Ripplewave remembered who that was, Buzzardgaze, the Vertexclan deputy. He made his way over to the entrance and smiled. "Are you from Driftclan?" he meowed and smiled.

"Yes, I need to see Lionstrike for a moment, please." she meowed.

"Sure thing!" Buzzardgaze meowed and padded off.

A few heartbeats later, Lionstrike ran up to the entrance and came up in front of Ripplewave. "What happened?" he meowed.

"Your litter is in my belly, Lionstrike."

"I... What? That's great!" he exclaimed and purred.

"I-It's not... I didn't want to have kits.." Ripplewave looked away, not wanting to meet the toms' gaze.

"Huh?" there was a hint of hurt in his mew. "I thought you loved me?"

"I do... It's just that I didn't expect this to happen. If either of our leaders find out, we'll be in big trouble."

"Live in Vertexclan with me," Lionstrike said. He was serious now.

"What?"

"Live in Vertexclan with me! We'll be able to raise our litter here and still be able to love each other!" he suggested.

"Lionstrike, you know I can't do that."

"Why?"

"I want to stay in Driftclan with my kin. I wouldn't feel right if I just left them like that," she meowed, looking up at Lionstrike now to see the hurt in his green eyes.

Lionstrike frowned. "But we're mates, right? Aren't I kin too?" he meowed back.

"I don't know if we can be mates anymore, Lionstrike." Ripplewave said, tears nearly falling from her eyes. She turned around and padded away. She was now heading back to Driftclan.

Ripplewave looked back at the Vertexclan warrior. His gazed seemed to darken as she got farther and farther away from him. She turned back around and sighed.

I only did what was best for the both of us, Lionstrike.

Chapter 32

Mistfall opened his eyes. The first thing he noticed was the stars were around him. There weren't many, but it still lit up the black area that wasn't the Warriors' den. Mistfall could hear whispers coming from outside of the darkened den. The Driftclan warrior couldn't make out what they said, though, so he got up and shook his fur out. He padded out of the den and as he did; he noticed the voices were getting louder. Once he made it out, the voices stopped completely. *Were there cats out here...?* He thought as looked around only to see nothing but a few dimly lit stars. "Hey! In front of you!" Mistfall snapped his head forward to see a shorter and younger tom.

"Who are you?" Mistfall unsheathed his claws and growled.

"Calm down! My name is Shred, and I am not here to hurt you. I'm here to give you a message." the small tom meowed.

Mistfall then sheathed his claws, looking down onto him. "How do I know I can trust you?"

"Well, it involves Fang and her father, Shredflash." he said.

"What?!" the Driftclan tom exclaimed, now with a worried look on his face.

Shred nodded. "I want you to look at this." he stepped aside to show Mistfall a light. The light showed Fang and another she-cat cowering in a corner, and a certain tom was standing in front of the two she-cats. His claws unsheathed and his teeth bared. It was Shredflash.

Fang! Mistfall thought.

"Mistfall." Shred started. "You must go to Fang. She's in danger, and so is your kin." he said.

"I need to go there now then!" Mistfall meowed.

Shred nodded as he faded away in front of Mistfall's eyes. Everything around the tom then went black. His eyes shot open as he was now back in the warriors' den. I will need some help. He thought and got up and quickly headed out of the den. Mistfall then went to Shellstar's den and padded inside. "Shellstar." he meowed.

"Yes?" he looked up. "Oh, hello Mistfall!" the leader meowed. "How are you?"

"There's no time for that, I know where Shredflash is."

Shellstar almost instantly hopped up onto his paws with a serious look on his face. "Where?"

"Get another warrior and meet me at the entrance!" he meowed and then ran out of the den, Shellstar then followed soon after.

A few heartbeats later, Mistfall saw Shellstar padding up to him with Featherdrip.

"You're bringing Featherdrip? Who will make sure the clan is okay?" the tawny and grey-furred tom asked.

"I told Sandcoat to take care of things, I trust him." Featherdrip meowed.

"Sandcoat is an outstanding warrior." Shellstar replied.

Featherdrip nodded.

"Let's go then!" Mistfall ran out of Driftclan camp, Shellstar and Featherdrip running behind him.

He was ready to go save his mate.

Chapter 33

Shredflash clawed at a tree in the forest and bit it. "She wouldn't dare leave me!" he hissed, then dug his claws deeper into the trunk. *She would.* A voice echoed in his head.

"I don't care what I said all those moons ago... She's staying with Eclipse and I, and I'm protecting them both!" he exclaimed, now leaving deep claw marks in the tree as he pulled them out.

She has a mate.

"What...?"

She has a mate, Shredflash.

"Who is she mates with?"

A warrior in Driftclan.

"No, I won't allow this. I'll kill him! The clans are dangerous, and I won't allow them to hurt my kin!" Shredflash was getting more and more angry.

They are coming here now.

"What?! How do they know where the small cave is?"

Fang told Mistfall.

Shredflash gave a hiss of annoyance as he turned around and headed back to the small cave.

*

Fang was ready to leave the small cave and live with Mistfall in Driftclan. She got up and stretched. Her belly was a bit of a problem since it had gotten bigger. She winced once she felt a kick. *Holding a litter in your stomach really isn't fun...* She thought, then padded over

to Eclipse. "Hi, Fang." she meowed.

"Hi, Eclipse! Can I tell you something?" she meowed.

"Sure! You can tell me anything."

Fang loved her mother a lot. It surprised her when she didn't freak out over her having a mate and her having kits soon. *I don't really want to tell Shredflash, though...* Fang thought, then took a deep breath in and out. "I will leave the cave and live with my mate in the clan called Driftclan," she said.

Eclipse's eyes widened, and her face went from surprised to worried. "Oh!"

"Something wrong? Do you not like me leaving?" Fang meowed.

"No, it's not that... I'm glad that you'll be safe with Driftclan! It's just that Shredflash... Might not like is as much," Eclipse meowed back.

"So? It's my life. I should be able to live it how I want!" Fang stomped one of her paws down and turned to leave the cave, but fear instantly stopped her, as a certain tom was in front of her.

"Fang I-" Eclipse paused as she followed Fang's gaze.

Shredflash stood there with an ominous look on his face. The grey tom quickly rammed into his daughter, knocking her back and making her fall over. "Shredflash!" Eclipse yelled, getting up and then padding in front of him.

"Make sure Fang is okay." he meowed.

"What is wrong with you?!" she growled. "That is our daughter! She has a litter in her belly as well!"

He unsheathed his claws and hissed at his mate. "Stay in here." he meowed, then padded out of the small cave.

"Shredflash..." Eclipse whispered to herself, then turned around and quickly headed over to Fang, helping her up.

"Are you alright, Fang?" Eclipse said.

Fang sighed and rubbed her nose with her paw. There was a bit of blood leaking from it. "Yeah, I'm fine... I'm not worried about Shredflash though... I'll be going and you're coming with me, Eclipse."

"I-I don't know about that yet, but how will we get past Shredflash?" Eclipse asked.

"My mate is coming to get me."

*

Shredflash padded out of the small cave and stared down the path that lead to the Ocean Side. *What are you doing, Shredflash?* Shred echoed in his head.

"Protecting my kin." he kept his claws unsheathed, ready to fight.

Chapter 34

"This way!" Mistfall shouted as he and the Driftclan leader and deputy followed him down the Ocean Side.

"I'm guessing we turn right into those trees?" Featherdrip meowed.

"Yeah!" Mistfall meowed back, turning right and running down the forest path. Shellstar and Featherdrip followed close by.

As they ran past the bushes and trees, Mistfall noticed something greyish up ahead. It was hiding behind some plants; it had vines wrapping around the top and sides of it. "Is that the cave up ahead?" Featherdrip said.

Mistfall nodded. "Yes, I think that's it!"

The three Driftclan cats ran up to the cave. Mistfall was the first to run in. "Fang?" he meowed and looked around, and once he spotted Fang and another she-cat in the left corner of the cave. He then ran over to his mate and began nuzzling her. "I'm so glad you're okay and Shredflash didn't get you!" he said.

"He knocked me over and nearly attacked Eclipse... But we're okay. I thought he was outside though?" she meowed back.

Featherdrip shook her head. "We didn't see him out there." the Driftclan deputy mewed.

"I'll go look around, he can't be far." Shellstar said and then padded out of the cave slowly.

"Be careful... Shredflash is dangerous..." Eclipse's meow shook.

"It'll be alright." Shellstar meowed back before heading out the cave completely.

Mistfall turned back to his mate. "We should get going now then." he meowed.

Fang nodded. "I agree, before Shredflash comes back."

There was then a yowl that came from outside the den. The yowl sounded like Shellstar. "Shellstar!" Featherdrip yelled and ran outside the cave.

Oh, no... Mistfall thought, running after Featherdrip. Fang and Eclipse were running out behind him. Once the four cats got out of the cave, Mistfall's eyes widened at the sight he was seeing. Shredflash was on top of the Driftclan leader, clawing at his muzzle, chest, and neck with deep scratches.

"Get off of him!" Featherdrip yelled and ran over to the two, tackling the grey tom off of her leader. She unsheathed her claws and raked at his eyes. She scratched his left eye, making the scar through it bleed instantly, causing Shredflash to screech in pain, biting Featherdrip's front leg, sinking his teeth in, causing her to screech. Shredflash threw the blue gray-furred she-cat off of him. She landed onto the side of him, sliding back a little. *I can't watch this for much longer...* Mistfall thought and ran over to Shredflash as he got up. Shredflash looked at him and growled. Mistfall unsheathed his claws, and Shredflash did. Mistfall battered at him, and Shredflash battered back. Both toms clawed and raked at each other for a few heartbeats before Mistfall found an opening. *There!* he thought and rammed himself into Shredflash, knocking him backwards. *While I still have time...* He looked over at Fang and Eclipse, who were both watching in horror. Mistfall looked back at Featherdrip, who got up and limped over to Shellstar. There was blood leaking from most of his upper body. Shellstar coughed and opened his eyes, panting. "Get out of here." he meowed.

"Not without you!" Featherdrip yelled.

Shredflash was stirring up.

"Go take the other two she-cats and go! I promise I'll come back safe." Shellstar yelled back.

"Shellstar..."

"That's an order, Featherdrip."

Featherdrip frowned, then turned over to Fang and Eclipse. She quickly limped over to them. "I'm taking you to Driftclan, let's go." she headed off towards the Ocean Side. Eclipse followed, but Fang looked over to Mistfall. And Mistfall looked over to Fang. Shredflash was already up again and padding towards Mistfall. "Mistfall behind you!" she yelled.

Mistfall turned around to see Shredflash lunging at him. Mistfall dodged it, but one of Shredflash's claws had scratched his shoulder, leaving a deep gash. Mistfall winced, but held in a screech. Shredflash turned around to face Mistfall and lunged at him again, Mistfall dodged it swiftly and turned to face the grey tom once more. "Go, Fang!" Mistfall shouted.

Fang just stood there for a bit.

"Go now! I'll be okay!" he shouted again.

Fang nodded and headed after Featherdrip and Eclipse.

Shredflash hissed. "You won't take my kin away from me!"

"And you won't harm them!" Mistfall hissed back and clawed at his muzzle, leaving a gash as it spurted out blood. Shredflash screeched and then pounced onto Mistfall, pinning him.

"Your life ends here and now!" Shredflash growled.

Mistfall was struggling to get up. He then looked over to see Shellstar limping up to Shredflash, coming from behind him. "Shellstar, don't!" Mistfall yelled, causing Shredflash to turn around. Shellstar drove his claws into Shredflash's back leg, blood now leaking out. Shredflash shrieked in pain and whipped around. He then retaliated by his right claws into his neck. Shredflash pushed his claws deeper. "Die!" Shredflash said.

"Shellstar!" Mistfall yelled as he watched his leader fall over onto his side, his neck gushing out blood.

Shredflash completely got off of Mistfall and stared down at Shellstar. "You shouldn't have done that," he meowed darkly.

Shellstar twitched on the ground as he continued to bleed out. Shredflash lifted his paw, claws unsheathed, and slammed it down onto his neck, pushing them further and further in. Mistfall watched in horror, and the anger inside him grew. "Stop!" he yelled, getting up and pouncing onto Shredflash. Shredflash attempted to bite his legs, but he couldn't reach them. Mistfall begun clawing as fast as he could at the tom's face. "Leave us alone!" he shouted and took his left claws and drove them into Shredflash's neck. Then took his right claws and gave the grey tom a deep rake down his belly. Shredflash shrieked as his eyes rolled back into his head, as Mistfall pushed his claws deeper into his neck, clawing at his belly repeatedly. Eventually, Shredflash stopped moving completely. Mistfall hopped off of him and padded over to Shellstar, who looked up at Mistfall. "Heh.." he meowed, then coughed up blood.

"You'll be fine, right Shellstar?" Mistfall did the best he could to take Shellstar back to Driftclan. "You have more lives, right? You'll get through this!"

"Mistfall, put me down, please."

Tears fell from his eyes. "Shellstar, please!"

"I'm losing too much blood. Go back to Driftclan. You can come for my body later and bury it. Just make sure every cat is safe." his mew hoarse.

"No, I'm making sure you live!" Mistfall yelled.

Mistfall felt Shellstar get heavier. "Shellstar?" he gently set him down.

There was no response from him.

"Shellstar!" Mistfall yelled and dug his muzzle into his fur.

Shellstar was dead.

Mistfall lifted his muzzle up, tears falling onto Shellstar's body. *I'll be back for you, Shellstar... I'll make sure we bury your body in the warm sand by the Ocean Side...* He thought, then headed back to Driftclan.

The Driftclan warrior did not know if they won or lost the battle.

Chapter 35

Featherdrip sighed and rolled over in her new nest inside of the leaders' den. She felt like she wasn't ready to become the new leader of Driftclan. It upset Featherdrip that she had to look at the past leader of Driftclan from a unique perspective. Under the sand by the Ocean Side. They had buried Shellstar next to where Blizzardfluff and Icejaw were. Shellstar was closer to the ocean, though, because of him having a significant interest in it. *Will I even be able to go to the Ocean Side without tearing up?* She thought, *I loved him so much...* Featherdrip nearly cried at the thought of him. Even if she didn't show it much, she wanted to be mates with Shellstar. The soon to be leader of Driftclan sighed once more as she looked outside of the den. *No sign of Thistlewhisper yet...* Featherdrip still wasn't sure if she was ready or not. She then heard paw steps enter the den and looked up to see the Driftclan medicine cat, Thistlewhisper. "Are you ready to go?" she meowed.

Featherdrip hesitated for a bit before answering. "Yes, I'm ready."

"Great! Let's go then." Thistlewhisper padded out of the leaders' den.

Featherdrip got up and followed the medicine cat.

*

A while later, the two she-cats were at the Ocean Side. The water moved back and forth as they stood in front of it. "Lay down and lap some water up."

"Alright." she did so and lapped up the ocean water with her tongue, swallowing it. Featherdrip wrinkled her nose a little because of the water having a very salty taste. She then closed her eyes, as it felt like she couldn't move her body anymore. *Why can't I move?* the Driftclan cat thought as everything around her seemed to get darker.

Featherdrip's eyes shot open as she hopped up onto her paws,

panting heavily as she looked around to see stars everywhere around her. She looked forward to see a ton of tiny stars that stretched across from what seemed like forever, just like the ocean. Featherdrip could still feel the warm feeling of the sand between her paws, but when she looked down at her paws, there were only tons of stars grouped together. "Kind of bright.." she meowed to herself.

"Shouldn't be too much of a bother, right?" she heard a familiar meow behind her. Featherdrip turned around to see the face of Blizzardfluff.

"Blizzardfluff?"

"Yep! Here to give you three out of your nine new lives!" she meowed with a wide smile.

"Oh! Well, uh. Okay then!" Featherdrip smiled.

Blizzardfluff padded up to Featherdrip and placed her nose on the top of her head. "With these three lives, I give you certainty, faith, and forgiveness. Use them well to believe in your clan." she meowed and stepped back so another cat could pad up to her. It was Otterpelt.

"Hi, Featherdrip!" she meowed happily.

"Hello, Otterpelt, it's great to see you again!" Featherdrip happily meowed back.

"I hope you're doing well! And Driftclan too!"

"Don't worry, everything is well!"

Otterpelt smiled as she placed her nose on Featherdrip's head. "With these three lives, I give you protection, resilience, and endurance. Use them well to defend your clan from all danger." the past medicine cat meowed and stepped back. Featherdrip's eyes widened in surprise as she saw who padded up to her next.

Shellstar... she thought.

"Hello, Featherdrip." Shellstar meowed and smiled.

"I... I'm sorry that I wasn't there for you... I could've stayed I-"

Shellstar cut her off by placing his nose on Featherdrip's head. "With these three lives, I give you strength, instincts, and courage. Use them well to lead your clan." Shellstar meowed.

Featherdrip stopped herself from tearing up and crying.

Shellstar stepped back a little. "I hail you by your new name, Featherstar. Your old life is no more. You have now received the nine lives of a leader, and Starclan grants you the guardianship of Driftclan. Defend it well; care for the young and old; honor your ancestors and the traditions of the warrior code; live each life with pride and dignity."

Featherstar nodded, tears now falling from her eyes.

"Featherstar! Featherstar! Featherstar!" the three cats cheered.

"You'll do great." Shellstar meowed and smiled. "I'll be watching over you, Featherstar," he was fading away.

A few heartbeats later, everything around Featherstar went dark. She soon woke up, still laying on the sands of the Ocean Side. "Ready to head back, Featherstar?" Thistlewhisper mewed.

Featherstar stood up and nodded, tears still falling. "Yes, I am."

*

Once the new Driftclan leader and the medicine cat padded into the camp, Featherstar padded over to the Tide Pool. "Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" she yelled.

Featherstar watched as the clan came out from their dens or stopped what they were doing, and they padded over to the Tide Pool. Once the group seemed large enough, Featherstar continued to speak. "I, Featherstar, shall appoint a new deputy!" she yelled.

There were some gasps.

"The new deputy of Driftclan is Sandcoat!" she yowled.

Every cat looked over to the cream and grey-furred tom as he padded up in front of the crowd. "I will do my best as the new deputy of Driftclan." he meowed.

"Sandcoat! Sandcoat! Sandcoat!" Driftclan cheered.

Featherstar smiled as her clan cheered for the new deputy. She was now feeling better about being the new leader of Driftclan.

*

Fang sat in a nest in the Driftclan Nursery. Eclipse was resting on one side of her and Ripplewave on the other. "How's clan life for you so far?" Ripplewave asked.

"It's alright, it would be better if I didn't have this litter in my belly!" she meowed back and sighed.

Ripplewave chuckled. "Tell *me* about it! My belly is way bigger than yours. I'm surprised I haven't kitted at this point!"

Both she-cats giggled. Fang thought living in a clan would be terrible, but it wasn't at all for her. "Hey!" there was a meow that was coming from outside the Nursery. Both Fang and Ripplewave looked up to see Mistfall pad in with a wide smile on his face.

"Hello, Mistfall!" Fang mewed.

"Hi." Ripplewave said.

"You doing alright?" Mistfall padded over to Fang and sniffed, then nuzzled her.

"Yes, yes. I'm fine." she meowed.

"Good!"

"You know, you don't have to check on me every two seconds-" Fang then started wincing in pain. She nearly wanted to screech.

"Mistfall, go get Thistlewhisper!" Ripplewave yelled.

Mistfall already left to get the medicine cat.

*

A while later, after some yelling and some stick chomping, Fang kitted two healthy kits. One tom and one she-cat. "I want you to name one and I name the other, Mistfall. How do you clan cats name them?" Fang mewed.

"Well, here, I'll name the she-cat!" he meowed.

"Okay!"

"I'll name her Morningkit!" Mistfall said with a wide smile.

"That's a wonderful name!" Fang replied.

"What will you name him?" he pointed his tail at the mewling tom-kit.

Fang thought for a while, still confused. But she then smiled once she came up with a name. "I'll name him..."

"Shadowkit." she meowed.

"I love it!" Mistfall meowed back and nuzzled his mate.

I'll protect the three of you for as long as I live. Fang thought and purred.

Epilogue

A cat could hear voices, they couldn't tell who it was.

Are there multiple voices? Is there only one?

"It's only me, Shredflash!" the voiced yelled.

Wait... That couldn't be...

"It can!"

Shredflash shot up and hopped onto his paws. He was panting as he stared at a short tom in front of him. "S-Shred?" he meowed.

"Well, who else would it be?" he meowed.

"You seem... Different..." Shredflash meowed back.

Shred was a black tom with no eyes. He smiled at Shredflash. "Is that an unpleasant thing?" he mewed.

"No... Just new. I don't know what to do now though, my kin has left me and I'm all torn up..." Shredflash looked at his paws.

"Shredflash, look into my eyes!"

"Why, Shred?" he looked at him, "You have no eyes-" Shredflash stared into the eyeholes on Shred's face and saw darkness leaking from them.

"Shredflash, we're not done yet." Shred's voice was deeper now. "We have things to do."

Shredflash seemed as if he in a trance now.

"What's next for *you*, Shredflash?" the short, black, and eyeless tom meowed.

Shredflash gained a darkened look, "Our- No... My next move is to get revenge on both Vertexclan and Driftclan for ruining my life..." he said and padded away from the small cave and padded deeper into the forest.

"And how will you do that?" Shred asked as he padded next to Shredflash.

Shredflash stopped for a moment and stared off into the distance.

"I'll kill every cat."

Both toms continued padding down into the forest, disappearing after a while.

Trivia

Here are some things I felt needed to be answered:

-Ripplewave had a litter of 6.

-Shred can talk to any cat in their dreams.

-When Shred appears in dreams, the one dreaming is not in Starclan nor in The Dark Forest. It's somewhere in the middle of both.

-Shredflash's injuries weren't enough to kill him, that's why he's alive.

-Emberfoot and Lightningblaze become mates and have a litter of 3.

-Eclipse stayed as a queen for Driftclan. She did not want to partake in any warrior duties.

A/N: We did it again guys! Wrote another book and completed it! Took me longer to write than Uprising did! (Probably because it's Summer lol.) But anyway, thank you all so much for reading this! It really means a lot to me! And don't worry, there will be a third book!

Thank you so much for reading Warriors: Retribution!! 🩶🩶🩶💕❤

If you have questions, just comment or DM me! 🩶

-OKW

Book #3

The third book is out now!

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"It's not over until it's over."

Warriors: Downfall